

State of California
Department of Child Support Services

Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement

October 2002

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DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**



It is with great pleasure that I present the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Program. The California Department of Child Support Services, in partnership with local child support agencies, has developed the QAPI Program to provide the structure, approach and tools necessary to maximize the performance of California's Child Support Program.

The Department of Child Support Services and our local partners recognize the critical importance of child support to the self-sufficiency of families and well-being of children and share in the commitment to provide the most effective and highest quality services possible. We further believe that this

must be approached in a focused and structured manner to ensure uniform and consistent high quality services statewide. The QAPI Program establishes the framework through which to focus all of our efforts on maximizing the performance of individual local child support agencies and the Child Support Program statewide. The Program will evolve and become more refined over time.

The Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Program is one more step in fulfilling the vision embodied in State Child Support Program reform legislation passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Davis in 1999. We welcome your input as we continue our journey to make California's Child Support Services Program responsive to the needs of our customers, the families, and children of California.

I would like to thank those who have worked extraordinarily hard in developing the QAPI Program. In particular, I wish to thank Carole Hood, DCSS Chief Deputy Director, who not only served as the principal author of this manual but who also provides the guiding vision of the Program. Additionally, the work of the DCSS staff and the entire QAPI workgroup has been invaluable and demonstrates again the ongoing collaboration between DCSS and the local child support agencies to ensure the highest quality child support services to the children and families of California.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS), in partnership with local child support agencies, is establishing the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Program as a means to effectively and continuously monitor, evaluate, and improve the performance of California's Child Support Services Program. The DCSS and local agencies recognize the critical importance of child support to the self-sufficiency of families. Therefore, we believe that the child support services we provide must be of the highest quality possible, while at the same time recognizing and supporting the individual needs and circumstances of families. Together, the DCSS and local agencies have developed the QAPI Program to provide a planned, coordinated, and uniform statewide structure, approach and tools to performance improvement. The QAPI Program will assist us in meeting our responsibilities to families by focusing our efforts statewide on maximizing the performance of California's Child Support Services Program.

This Chapter provides background information as well as an overview of the QAPI Program. The background section describes the recent evolution of the child support program at both the national and State level, focusing on changes that gave rise to the QAPI effort. The purpose section describes what the QAPI Program is designed to accomplish. The methodology section describes the process used to develop the QAPI Program, including the framework and this QAPI Manual. Lastly, the description section provides a high level overview of the QAPI Program in its entirety.

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BACKGROUND

The child support program has undergone significant change at both the national and State level in the last five years. Change is not new to the child support program; in fact, child support professionals have long recognized that change in this program is a constant. However, the federal shift in focus from a largely compliance based to a performance based child support program marked a more significant and fundamental change. This federal change in program emphasis mirrored similar thinking in California, where program restructuring was underway. The result is that the federal and state statutory construct for the child support program is now squarely performance based, using shared measures and measurement systems to evaluate performance.

It was this fundamental shift in focus for the child support program that gave rise to the QAPI Program -- a statewide approach to managing in a performance-based environment. Knowledge of the federal and state statutory construct provides an important context for understanding the QAPI Program. Therefore, what follows is a brief description of this context.

The QAPI Program was developed and designed within the construct of federal statute and regulations governing the child support program. The federal government has long required all states to operate a Child Support Program, a program that is heavily legalistic, with extensive and complex operating rules and prescriptive case processing requirements. Continuously providing child support services is a condition for receipt of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. However, passage of the federal Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 shifted the sole focus from compliance with case processing rules and incentives payments based only on collections and cost-effectiveness, to performance and incentive funding based on agreed upon measures of program success.

The intent of the federal performance-based incentive funding system is to use specific performance indicators to measure the program's success in achieving its goals and objectives and to reward states for achieving intended results. The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) was charged with establishing the performance measures that would indicate program success. After extensive research and widespread input from states and other stakeholders, measures were selected in five program areas: (1) paternity establishment; (2) child support order establishment; (3) collection of current support; (4) collection of arrears (past due child support); and (5) cost effectiveness (collections compared to the cost of the program). Further, a threshold level (minimum standard) of performance was established for each measure. These measures were determined to reflect the work necessary to successfully provide child support services.

In addition, the performance data submitted by states to the federal government must be accurate, complete and reliable. The OCSE conducts audits at least once every three years to assess data reliability, although to date audits have occurred annually.

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To qualify for incentives and avoid penalties, data must meet a 95 percent standard of reliability beginning in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2001.

The federal performance-based incentive funding approach combines both incentives and penalties (rewards and risks) to boost state performance in the defined and measurable areas. Federal performance incentive funding is based on each state's earned share of a capped incentive payment pool. Incentive payments to states are based on: (1) performance on the five measures, with the first three measures (paternity establishment, order establishment, and current collections) weighted heavier than the last two measures (collection of arrears and cost-effectiveness); (2) collections during the FFY, with collections on behalf of current and former assistance recipients weighted heavier than collections on behalf of families never on assistance; and (3) performance of all states. The federal incentive pool began at \$422 million for FFY 2000, increasing to \$429 million in FFY 2001 and \$450 million in FFY 2003, with subsequent yearly increases.

Failure to meet the federally established minimum standard for performance or 95 percent data reliability on a measure disqualifies a state from earning incentive payments on that measure. In addition, a federal penalty system applies to three of the five program areas. States are penalized for performance falling below threshold levels for paternity establishment, child support order establishment, and collection of current support. Compliance with national goals in the remaining two performance areas, collection on arrears and cost-effectiveness, is support through the incentive payment system only, with state falling below specified threshold levels ineligible for federal incentives paid on these measures.

The performance-based penalty system also provides for an automatic one-year corrective action period. If a state fails to meet minimum performance thresholds and/or submit reliable data, a penalty is assessed only after failure to take corrective action during an automatic one-year corrective action period. For example, if a state fails the performance measure threshold in FFY 2001, it must have reliable data and meet the performance measure threshold in FFY 2002 (the corrective action year), or face a federal penalty in FFY 2003. Federal penalties are assessed as a percentage of a state's TANF block grant. Penalties equate to one to two percent for the first finding of non-compliance, two to three percent for the second consecutive finding, and three to five percent for the third or subsequent consecutive finding. Total penalties may not exceed 25 percent of a state's TANF block

The impact of the federal Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 is tremendous -- it means that the Child Support Program is now one of few health and human services programs that operates using clearly delineated federal performance measures to indicate program success. Further, financial rewards and risks are tied directly to achieving at least minimum acceptable performance levels on measures, with greater rewards for higher levels of performance. Finally, strict data reporting, statistically significant data reliability levels, and federal case audits validate the accuracy of performance and data submissions. This performance measurement and

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incentive funding system separates the child support program from others, making it highly visible, measurable based on shared nationwide measures, highly accountable, and intentionally comparable with the programs of other states.

While the federal changes were underway, California was in the midst of re-evaluating the direction and approach of its child support program. In 1999, after years of increasing scrutiny and criticism from the Legislature, child support advocates, oversight agencies, and families, the Legislature passed and Governor Davis signed legislation that set in motion a major restructuring of California's child support program. All of these groups and individuals had charged that the program as structured did not effectively collect child support for California's children. In particular, a program operated independently by 58 county district attorneys, without strong State leadership, was found not to be serving parents or children in a fair, uniform and consistent manner. Further, the effectiveness of the program in terms of the amount collected in support of children was deemed to be unacceptable. Fundamental program design, operational, and performance issues were found at the root of these criticisms. In response, California's child support reform legislation was passed to provide the vision, direction, and structure to overhaul the way the program operated.

The goal of the legislation was to create a new model for delivery of child support services and collection activities, one in which high quality services are administered uniformly and equitably throughout the State. The reform legislation created the Department of Child Support Services effective January 1, 2000, with strong state leadership authority and responsibility for the statewide child support program. It also moved responsibility for the program at the local level from the offices of district attorneys to new local child support agencies, and required improved customer service through a uniform complaint resolution and State hearing process. The legislation also established a partnership between DCSS and the Franchise Tax Board (FTB), the State's tax collection agency, to procure, develop, implement, and maintain a single statewide automation system.

Within the context that led to reform, there were specific criticisms relating to the lack of meaningful oversight and statewide management of the child support program that are particularly relevant and instructive to the design of the QAPI Program. A California Bureau of State Audits study identified a number of impediments to the success of the program. A central theme was the lack of State leadership that permitted use of broad discretion in local program operations resulting in uneven and often ineffective service. Another primary theme was the failure of the State to: (1) effectively monitor county performance and assist poorly performing counties to implement program improvements; (2) ensure the accuracy of data received from counties; and (3) complete any analysis of program data to identify counties that need assistance or to give context to the State's performance. In sum, the State was failing to effectively monitor county performance and use performance data as the basis upon which to identify corrective action and performance improvements.

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It is with these findings in mind that the child support reform legislation included as a major tenet, the establishment and operation of a performance-based system to permit effective oversight and management of the child support program. Family Code Section 17600(a)(3)(4)(5) finds and declares:

The State does not provide information to counties on child support enforcement programs, based on common denominators that would facilitate comparison of program performance. Providing this information would allow county officials to monitor program performance and to make appropriate modifications to improve program efficiency. This information is required for effective management of the child support program.

Further, Family Code Section 17602 requires DCSS to develop performance measures for local child support agencies, identify local agencies that are out of compliance with those measures, and work with those agencies to correct deficiencies and improve program performance.

The DCSS adopted State performance measures for local child support agencies effective January 1, 2001. The State's initial performance measures consist of the five federal measures and eleven State measures; of the eleven, nine are mandated by Family Code 17602(a) and two medical support-related measures were added by DCSS based on stakeholder input. The State measures largely provide greater detail in the same areas as the federal measures. The State performance measures are: (1) cases with orders for current support; (2) cases with current support collections; (3) average amount collected per case with collections; (4) cases with orders for arrears; (5) cases with arrears collections; (6) alleged fathers or obligors served with a Summons and Complaint; (7) annual paternity establishment rate; (8) annual support order establishment rate; (9) total support collected per \$1.00 expended; (10) cases with medical support orders; and (11) cases with medical support provided as ordered. All 14 State performance measures were subsequently adopted in State regulation.

The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies and stakeholders, has made significant progress in moving to a performance-based system for California's child support program. Significant work was needed to make the performance-based concept operational, including completing many of the major program restructuring tasks also included in the reform legislation. In fact, the broader program restructuring was foundational to establishing an effective performance-based child support program. Other major restructuring tasks included establishing the new state and local child support departments, reducing the number of interim computer systems through multiple conversions, and completing extensive regulatory work to bring greater statewide uniformity in operations.

In addition, DCSS and local agencies have spent significant time and effort in ensuring improved data reliability and enhanced reporting. A performance-based system can be effective only if the right measures are used and the measurement data collected are uniform, consistent and accurate. Unfortunately, California's child support program had

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a long history of significant data reliability and reporting problems. The data reliability problems were a major factor leading to the reform legislation. However, data reliability problems occurring in a very large case processing, time and data driven program, that previously operated with more than 30 different local automation systems, do not lend themselves to simple or quick fixes. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made through extensive data definitional and mapping efforts to ensure uniform, consistent, and accurate data, beginning with data elements mandated by federal and state reports.

Finally, the data used to monitor and report on the performance measures, collections, and expenditures have been converted to electronic data entry and submission directly from all local child support agencies. The use of paper and manual data entry and compilation that contributed to significant data reliability problems has been eliminated. The automation of data collection greatly increases data reliability by using various systems edits and checks on data consistency.

With these administrative tasks complete, managing to achieve performance results became the focus of DCSS and local child support agencies. The intent of federal and State statute was clear – to assess child support program performance based on shared measures that indicate success. However, DCSS found that existing federal and state performance oversight and monitoring schemes did not provide the structure, approach and tools necessary to manage in a performance-based environment.

The existing oversight schemes were developed prior to implementation of the new federal and State performance-based systems and/or approaches. The federal oversight structure consisted solely of an annual self-assessment of compliance with case processing and timeframe requirements using caseload sampling and case review. While these compliance requirements were to remain important, there was no direct link to the five federal performance measures. California's statute provided the parameters for a performance-based measurement and oversight scheme, but not the details. Moreover, neither existing oversight schemes provided a systematic way to drill down to identify performance areas and measures below the five federal measures that if performed well would contribute to improved outcomes. As a result, there was no roadmap to assist DCSS or local agencies in knowing how to improve their performance on the federal and State measures.

It was this environment that led the Department of Child Support Services, in collaboration with local child support agencies, to begin to look for new ways in which to manage to achieve desired performance outcomes statewide. The QAPI Program is our approach to managing and achieving intended performance objectives.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the QAPI Program is to continuously improve the quality of child support program services provided to the public through implementation of a statewide structure and approach to performance assessment and improvement. The QAPI Program provides the overall framework for routine, focused, and coordinated attention on functional areas and tasks that will result in desired program outcomes. It will provide a means to integrate the 16 mandated performance measures with other program performance expectations, identify tasks that lead to achievement of the performance measures, and enable informed corrective action and program improvements locally and statewide. The QAPI Program provides the statewide structure, approach and tools to continually improve the performance of California's child support program.

METHODOLOGY

The Department of Child Support Services, in collaboration with local child support agencies, began development of the QAPI Program in early 2001. The effort began with DCSS leading several different activities to explore new performance-based approaches to managing California's child support program. These activities provided valuable information that was later used by a joint DCSS/LCSA QAPI Workgroup to formulate the framework and approach of the QAPI Program. A description of the methodology used to develop the QAPI Program follows.

The DCSS initial data gathering efforts used to inform the QAPI Workgroup effort consisted of several parts that were undertaken simultaneously. First, the DCSS reviewed the literature to identify the latest thinking in regard to assessing and measuring performance. A great deal of material was considered that focused on performance measurement and results accountability. Much has been written in this area that was found to be applicable to organizations in general as well as those providing human services.

Second, the DCSS contracted with Sjoberg Evashenk Consulting LLC., to conduct a study to identify ways to improve program performance. The study assessed State and local capacity to measure performance and manage to continuously improve key outcomes, identify specific ways to improve performance on key federal and State measures, and develop new tools for analyzing program data and managing performance. The study consisted of on-site reviews of eight local agencies, contacts with eight states, and contacts with professional associations that have quality assurance programs. The local agency on-site reviews were to assess current quality assurance approaches, and track performance data reporting to determine whether cases were properly reported on mandate reports. The contacts with other states were to identify structures and processes in place relating to managing federal performance measures. The contacts with professional associations in public and private service areas that have quality assurance and/or accreditation programs were to identify possible prototypes. The reviews focused on identifying current results-based evaluation systems, quality assurance mechanisms, and key indicators of program performance.

Third, the DCSS contracted with Policy Studies, Inc., a nationally respected firm with extensive child support program experience, to conduct management reviews of five local child support agencies that have experienced long-standing performance difficulties. The focus of the reviews was to identify ways in which to improve outcomes relative to federal and State performance measures, collections, medical support, and effective customer service. The reviews considered organizational structure, workflow procedures, communications systems, and management approaches designed to support an environment of continuous program improvement. The effort resulted in identification of local and statewide issues impacting performance.

Fourth, the DCSS conducted "Best Practices" on-site reviews of four local child support agencies that achieved high scores on the five federal performance measures during

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FFY 2000. The reviews focused on a number of factors including performance management, staff training and development, communication, customer service, and case management functions such as intake, paternity and order establishment, locate, enforcement, and case closure. The reviews identified best practices in these areas. Finally, the DCSS conducted an initial analysis of the current performance levels of each local child support agency, and the inter-relationships between the federal measures. The analysis of current performance levels began the process to identify key data elements. Assessing the inter-relationship between measures began to show evidence that high performance on some measures may in fact lead to difficulty in achieving good outcomes on other measures. For example, this seems to be the case with the high rate of order establishment that may be leading to inaccurate orders, thereby resulting in lower rates of collection of current support and higher arrears. There are implications for how orders are established, how current staffing resources are deployed, and the tasks and activities that have a direct link to improved performance on the measures. There are also implications of various performance levels on State earned federal incentive funding. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, DCSS focused on data elements, currently available within consortia systems or desirable, that would permit informed business decisions and attention to statewide and local performance improvement.

The next major step of the QAPI Program development process was establishment of a workgroup of DCSS and local child support agency staff to study and make recommendations relative to the approach and structure of a quality assurance system. The workgroup members represented 13 local child support agencies of all caseload sizes, DCSS and FTB (representing the statewide automation project.) The workgroup met seven times during February through July 2002, with extensive work completed between meetings by all workgroup members. The QAPI Workgroup considered all of the information that had been developed by DCSS and its contractors in designing a statewide QAPI structure. The QAPI Workgroup effort resulted in the QAPI Manual that documents the work or essential business processes of the child support program, identifies performance and compliance measures, identifies best practices, and outlines collaborative oversight and technical assistance processes.

DESCRIPTION

The QAPI Program provides the structure, approach and tools to focus statewide and locally on child support program performance oversight and improvement. The importance of an effective QAPI function has been demonstrated by organizations with diverse missions, including manufacturers of goods as well as providers of health care and human services. These entities use mechanisms to prevent error and/or identify, remedy, and learn from those errors that do occur. The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies, intends the QAPI Program to provide the statewide structure and mechanisms for routine, ongoing review of performance and proactive identification of opportunities for improving child support program services.

The QAPI Program provides an important tool for DCSS and local child support agencies to assess and plan their performance improvement efforts. The DCSS and local agencies recognize the significant contribution that each makes to the overall success of the child support program. The statewide strategic plan for the child support program annually establishes performance goals, objectives and measures for the coming year. These statewide performance expectations are translated into individual local agency performance agreements incorporated within the annual Plan of Cooperation with DCSS. The local agency performance agreements and targets will be based on individual circumstances and priorities. The QAPI Program starts by providing the frame of reference to enable establishment of local agency performance goals.

The QAPI Manual is the primary tool that captures the framework of the QAPI Program. The QAPI Manual provides a structure to: (1) document the work or essential business processes of the child support program; (2) analyze and compare performance based on shared data; (3) identify, plan and target performance improvement actions; (4) identify best practices, research and innovations to assist in achieving performance improvements; and (5) enable continuous evaluation and improvement of child support program performance statewide and locally. A description of each component of the QAPI Program follows.

Document the Child Support Program Business

The QAPI framework provides a uniform and consistent statewide view of the child support program business—one in which there is a shared vision and understanding of the work to be performed. The foundation for the QAPI Program is documentation of the work, or the essential business and business processes, of the child support program. The QAPI Manual provides this foundation by capturing the entire scope of work performed by local child support agencies. The DCSS and QAPI Workgroup were aided in this process by activities undertaken to document the business requirements for the statewide automation system. The QAPI Manual documents the work in descending order of specificity, beginning with the broadest groupings of work, defined as performance areas, followed by functions, elements, and tasks. This work breakdown structure (WBS) intentionally captures the work of the child support program at a high level; the QAPI Manual is not an operations manual.

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The structured and uniform view of the child support business and business processes enables the use of a common frame of reference as the basis through which to assess and improve performance. Creating a shared statewide view of the work is fundamental to ensure that DCSS and local agencies are looking at the same functions, functional elements and tasks as they assess performance and develop targeted performance improvement plans.

Assess Performance Using Common Data Sets

The QAPI Program structure enables performance monitoring through collection, analysis, and comparison of selected data that is indicative of program performance. The QAPI Manual identifies standards for performance and related measures, that represent agreed upon indicators of performance, for all performance areas. The use of standard data sets enables identification of specific work areas in which performance does not meet commonly accepted levels, i.e., using comparative data to set performance benchmarks and/or tolerance bands. Performance monitoring through collection, analysis, and comparison of standard data sets is the foundation of performance improvement activities.

It is recognized that to begin it will not be possible to collect, aggregate and analyze data for all identified performance measures. Therefore, the QAPI Program will start by carefully selecting the scope and focus of data collection activities. Data collection and reporting will include: (1) standard data elements and reports implemented statewide; (2) optional data element and reports implemented by local agencies; (3) ad hoc reporting capability for selected data elements implemented as deemed appropriate statewide or by local agency or agencies; and (4) comparative data and reports prepared quarterly by DCSS for use by local agencies in assessing or benchmarking their performance and/or identifying areas for potential improvement.

It is further recognized that continual refinement of the performance measurement system to more clearly illuminate and focus performance efforts will be needed. The DCSS and local agencies will refine the QAPI Program to: (1) permit ranking of the importance of each performance measure based on its relationship and relative importance to achievement of a primary federal or State measure; (2) better determine the interplay between federal and State measures; and (3) establish “tolerance bands” or “triggers” to alert managers to areas not meeting acceptable performance levels.

Target Performance Improvement Actions

The QAPI Program structure enables DCSS and local child support agencies, through the use of these standard and optional data sets, to isolate and focus attention on targeted business areas or functions needing improvement. While the areas of focus for each local agency will differ, based on local program performance, circumstances and needs, the structure and process for continuous performance assessment and improvement will remain constant statewide. Local child support agencies will individually tailor their performance improvement plans within the larger construct and performance objectives of the statewide child support services program.

Use Best Practice, Research and Innovation to Inform Performance Improvement

The QAPI Program structure enables focused identification of best practices, relevant research, and innovations to assist state and local managers in achieving performance improvements. A key component of the QAPI Program is the focus on identifying and sharing information about what works. A Best Practices section is reserved after each functional area to capture the experiences of practitioners that are getting good results. The QAPI work breakdown structure permits identification of these practices and innovations by work grouping; thus providing an invaluable technical assistance tool for those seeking information on how to improve performance in a given area.

Enable Continuous Evaluation and Performance Improvement

The QAPI Program framework enables a statewide, focused, and coordinated approach to child support program performance improvement. The QAPI structure and process builds upon performance goals and objectives established through the statewide Strategic Plan for the child support program to establish local level performance targets. The QAPI Program will be used by all local child support agencies in managing their local program; however, local management teams may make adjustments to meet their own management tools or preferences. The QAPI Program requires each local agency to establish a QAPI structure, process and annual plan. The annual QAPI Plan will be based on continuous performance improvement principles including ongoing monitoring of overall performance, selected targeted performance reviews, and corrective action planning and execution. The QAPI Program permits local agencies to target performance improvement efforts based upon their individual program performance, circumstances, and needs.

Provide Oversight and Technical Assistance

The QAPI Program uses a collaborative statewide approach to quality and performance improvement. This approach values the involvement of all local child support agencies in the process to oversee performance improvement statewide, and in assisting other agencies seeking to improve their performance. A local agency review process using review teams comprised of state and local staff will be used to conduct regularly scheduled oversight reviews (one every two years) and focused reviews. Focused reviews will be conducted based on DCSS or local agency identification of performance issues and/or a request for a technical assistance visit from a local agency. The oversight and technical assistance process is structured to be collaborative and consultative in our shared efforts to achieve the highest possible performance standards.

It is anticipated that the QAPI Program and Manual will be updated, refined, and otherwise amended as operational experience and practice is gained. The QAPI Program will become an integral part of California's child support program. In sum, the QAPI Program provides a framework through which to enhance the performance of the California's child support program statewide and locally.

The Chapter that follows provides the Framework and Work Breakdown Structure for the QAPI Program. Individual Chapters that capture the detailed work of the child support program follow this Chapter.

CHAPTER 2

FRAMEWORK

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

OVERVIEW

The QAPI Manual is organized into six performance areas representing the work or essential business and business processes of California's child support program. The six performance areas are each addressed in separate chapters. Three of the performance areas are related to the child support business process and services: case management, financial management, and customer service and satisfaction. The remaining three performance areas capture the organizational requirements necessary to effectively support the business process and services: leadership and organization, administrative services, and improving organizational performance. The same work breakdown structure and format is used in each performance area. This Chapter presents an outline of the QAPI Manual work breakdown structure and format in order to familiarize the user with the layout and numbering system.

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE

The QAPI Program framework, structure and approach are reflected in the QAPI Manual. The foundation for the QAPI Program is documentation of the essential business processes and services that comprise the work to be performed in the child support program. Documentation of the work permits State and local child support professionals to have a shared frame of reference and understanding of the work to be performed. A common frame of reference enables State and local staff to focus, in a coordinated and uniform manner, their efforts to improvement program performance statewide and locally.

The QAPI Manual reflects at a high level the work performed by the child support program through development of a detailed work breakdown structure (WBS). The QAPI WBS identifies, defines, and groups the essential business processes of the child support program to the fourth level of detail. The four levels are: Performance Area, Function, Element, and Task. The fifth level is “Activity”, which is not addressed in the QAPI Manual, but would reflect the operational level, i.e., the processes and procedures developed by each local child support agency. Again, the QAPI Manual captures and documents work at a high level; it is not intended to be an operational or procedures manual. The child support program work breakdown structure is portrayed and defined below in descending order of magnitude.

Performance Area (Level 1)

Performance areas reflect the highest level and broadest grouping of work that must be completed to operate the child support program. There are six performance areas: Leadership and Organization, Case Management, Financial Management, Customer Service and Satisfaction, Administrative Services, and Improving Organizational Performance.

Function (Level 2)

Each performance area is divided internally into primary functions or functional areas representing categories of work. For example, the Case Management performance area is broken into four functional areas: Case Initiation and Update, Establishment and Modification, Enforcement, and Locate. The other performance areas are similarly divided.

Element (Level 3)

Each function or functional area is divided into elements representing the more detailed groupings of work to be performed. For example, the functional area of Case Initiation and Update is broken into four elements: Provide Application, Initiate or Respond to Request for IV-D Services, Update System with Information Received, and Transfer Case.

Task (Level 4)

Each element is divided into tasks that define the work to be performed. The tasks denote “what” the work is that should be completed.

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Again, the fifth level of the WBS would be **“Activity”**. The activity level of the WBS denotes “how” work should be performed at the local child support agency level. It is anticipated that this area will be the primary purview of individual local agencies that will define and establish work plans denoting the who, where, and when necessary to complete a given task.

The QAPI Manual work breakdown structure comprises the building blocks of the child support program, capturing essential business processes through increasingly detailed identification of work that must be performed. This detailed understanding of essential business processes facilitates the ability of DCSS and local child support agencies to isolate specific areas for focused attention and/or performance improvement. Perhaps even more importantly, it provides a framework and structure for a uniform and consistent statewide approach to the child support business.

CONTEXT AND VALUES

Each performance and functional area of the QAPI Manual is introduced with a Context and Values narrative. The context and values frame the setting for the work. The context in which work is performed and the values that are shared in performing the work are critically important aspects of establishing a common frame of reference for the child support business. The essential business processes of the child support program do not operate in isolation--free from philosophy, values, or ideas about how the work should be performed. The QAPI Manual provides the critically important contextual setting--our philosophy and values--to influence the way in which work is performed statewide.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

The QAPI Manual uses a performance measurement system that identifies performance expectations and related performance measures. Performance expectations and measures are established within the context of the statewide Strategic Plan for the child support program, which identifies the results and outcomes to be achieved. Performance expectations are captured as a “Standard” within each element of the WBS. The related means through which to assess whether a standard is achieved are captured as “Performance Measures” within each element of the WBS. Performance measures are further defined by noting “Compliance Measures,” measures of performance that previously were reflected through the compliance review process. Finally, the “Authority,” whether statutory, regulatory, or policy, is noted within each element of the WBS for ease of reference. Each of these terms is further defined below.

Result or Outcome

The child support program results or outcomes are reflected in the statewide Strategic Plan for the Child Support Program. A result or outcome is the desired condition to be achieved; the desired end state. The Strategic Plan outcomes include: increased support for children participating in the program; excel on federal performance measures; and enhanced customer service and satisfaction. These outcomes are all intended to contribute to family self-sufficiency and healthy children.

Standard

A standard is a best practice performance expectation. Standards set forth performance expectations by focusing on “what” work is to be performed, with little emphasis on “how,” that affects the quality of child support services. The focus of standards is on key areas in which good performance is likely to lead to good results or outcomes. If the DCSS and local child support agencies focus on the right things and do them well, there is a strong likelihood that the intended results or outcomes will be achieved.

An indicator is a measure for which data is available that helps quantify the achievement of a desired result. Indicators also reflect the desired end to be achieved, providing a way to quantify the desired result. In addition, indicators communicate to a broad range of audiences and say something of central importance about the result.

Performance Measure

A performance measure, sometimes referred to as performance indicator, reflects how well the work or essential business functions and elements are being performed. Performance measures generally reflect a unit of measure or data element that captures the work performed and indicates the level of achievement or success. The child support program operates with 16 already defined federal and state performance measures. The performance measures identified in the QAPI Manual drill down, or measure performance below the

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Federal and State performance measures, reflecting in greater detail the work that must be performed to increase the likelihood of success on the federal and State measures.

As used in QAPI, performance measures reflect such items as: average rate of collections per case; percent of cases in which face-to-face interviews are conducted at the time of case initiation and intake; percent of complaints that are resolved without the need for a state hearing; and length of time taken to modify orders when financial circumstances of the obligor change. The QAPI performance measures and corresponding data elements will require additional review to ensure consensus on those initially selected, i.e., agreement that they reflect the essential work of the child support program.

Compliance Measure

As used in the QAPI Manual, a compliance measure is a specific type of performance measure that reflects a federal or state law, regulation or requirement of the child support program. Compliance measures are those that previously were assessed as part of the DCSS Program Compliance Process. Compliance measures are generally expressed in terms of the quantity or quality of effort, required timeframe, and/or other mandatory measurable performance expectation.

AUTHORITY

The QAPI Manual provides an authority citation within each element that notes related statute, regulation, policy or procedure to permit easy reference to detailed source documents and materials.

BEST PRACTICE, INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

The QAPI Manual provides a Best Practice, Innovation and Research section at the end of each function to capture proven ways in which to achieve success and/or data or thinking that may influence the way in which the work is performed. The DCSS and local child support agencies have participated in reviewing, collecting and sharing best practice information. However, there has not been a mechanism for structuring, systematically collecting, or uniformly and consistently distributing this information to all local child support agencies and their staff. The QAPI Manual provides the structure through which best practices, innovations, and research can be collected and associated with specific business functions and elements. This information will be collected and released to all manual holders as an update to the QAPI Manual.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

The QAPI Manual work breakdown structure documents the work or essential business and business processes of the California's child support program. Performance will be assessed in each of these performance areas, with performance improvement actions identified and taken as appropriate. The following provides a summary overview of the WBS by performance area, function, and element. The intent of this Section is simply to orient the reader to the entire framework and structure of the QAPI Program.

Chapter 3—Leadership and Organization

The Leadership and Organization performance area addresses the most critical aspects of leading, organizing, and managing the child support program. The functions and elements identified directly lead to and/or increase the likelihood of attaining the desired program results. The focus is on establishing an organizational vision, operating philosophy, and necessary management structure and processes. The Leadership and Organization performance area has four primary functions: Leadership, Organization and Management, Organizational Ethics and Integrity, and Customer Rights and Responsibilities. Each of these functions is further defined by element as follows:

LO.1 Leadership

LO.1.1 Provide Effective Leadership

LO.1.2 Establish Strategic Plan

LO.2 Organization and Management

LO.2.1 Create Effective Organizational Structure

LO.2.1 Create Effective Management Structure

LO.2.3 Create Effective Organizational Linkages

LO.3 Organizational Ethics and Integrity

LO.3.1 Promote Ethical Conduct

LO.3.2 Promote Integrity in Decision-Making

LO.4 Customer Rights and Responsibilities

LO.4.1 Promote Customer Rights

LO.4.2 Protect Customer Confidentiality

Chapter 4—Business Process: Case Management

The Case Management performance area is one of the three essential business process and services areas that comprise the child support program. The other two areas are Financial Management and Customer Service and Satisfaction. Together these three performance areas comprise the essential business processes and services of the child support program. The Case Management performance area has four primary functions: Case Initiation and Update; Establishment and Modification; Enforcement; and Locate. Each of these functions is further defined by element as follows:

CM.1 Case Initiation and Update

- CM.1.1 Provide Application**
- CM.1.2 Initiate or Respond to Request for IV-D Services**
- CM.1.3 Update System with Information Received**
- CM.1.4 Transfer Cases**

CM.2 Establishment and Modification

- CM.2.1 Generate Summons and Complaint and Proposed Judgment and/or Petition**
- CM.2.2 Conduct Service of Process**
- CM.2.3 Receive Answer or Other Response**
- CM.2.4 Attend Court Hearing**
- CM.2.5 Obtain Stipulated Order**
- CM.2.6 Prepare Default Order**
- CM.2.7 Prepare for Dismissal**
- CM.2.8 Validate Service**
- CM.2.9 Review Genetic Appointment Results**
- CM.2.10 Register Order**
- CM.2.11 Notification of Right to Review and Adjustment**
- CM.2.12 Receive Request for Review and Adjustment**
- CM.2.13 Initiate Review and Adjustment**

CM.3 Enforcement

- CM.3.1 Perform Intercept Activities**
- CM.3.2 Perform Data Match Activities**
- CM.3.3 Perform Lien Activities**
- CM.3.4 Request Interstate Service**
- CM.3.5 Perform Medical Support Activities**
- CM.3.6 Perform Security Deposit Activities**
- CM.3.7 Pursue Court Action Activities**
- CM.3.8 Submit for Internal Revenue Service Full Collection**
- CM.3.9 Perform Order/Notice to Withhold Income Activities**
- CM.3.10 Bankruptcy**
- CM.3.11 Respond to Request for Case Closure**
- CM.3.12 Close Case that Meets Criteria**

CM.4 Locate

- CM.4.1 Locate Demographics**
- CM.4.2 Locate Assets**
- CM.4.3 Open Cases for Locate Only**

Chapter 5—Business Process: Financial Management

The Financial Management performance area is one of the three essential business process and services areas that comprise the child support program. The other two areas are Case Management and Customer Service and Satisfaction. Together these three performance areas comprise the essential business processes and services of the child support program. The Financial Management performance area has four primary

functions: Obligation; Collection; Distribution; and Disbursement. Each of these functions is further defined by element as follows:

FM.1 Obligation

- FM.1.1 Maintain Accurate Amounts Owed**
- FM.1.2 Assign and Unassign Arrears**
- FM.1.3 Adjust Obligation**
- FM.1.4 Request for Balance**
- FM.1.5 Generate Account History**
- FM.1.6 Perform Account Audit and Prepare Audit Report**
- FM.1.7 Generate Billing Statement**
- FM.1.8 Generate Monthly Statement of Collections and Distribution**

FM.2 Collection

- FM.2.1 Receive and Process Collections**
- FM.2.2 Actively Work Undistributed Collections**
- FM.2.3 Resolve Collection Exceptions**
- FM.2.4 Reconcile Collections**

FM.3 Distribution

- FM.3.1 Allocate Identified Collections**
- FM.3.2 Distribution of Allocated Collections**
- FM.3.3 Distribute Assistance Collections**
- FM.3.4 Adjust Collections Previously Distributed**
- FM.3.5 Generate Disbursement Instructions**

FM.4 Disbursement

- FM.4.1 Generate Disbursement**
- FM.4.2 Void Disbursement**
- FM.4.3 Reconcile Disbursement**

Chapter 6—Business Process: Customer Service and Satisfaction

The Customer Service and Satisfaction performance area is one of the three essential business process and services areas that comprise the child support program. The other two areas are Case Management and Financial Management. Together these three performance areas comprise the essential business processes and services of the child support program. The Customer Service and Satisfaction performance area has six primary functions: Service Planning; Accessibility to Services and Information; Outreach to Customers and Communities; Customer Focused Business Processes and Services; Customer Inquiry and Complaint Response; and Customer Satisfaction. Each of these functions is further defined by element as follows:

CSS.1 Service Planning

- CSS.1.1 Determine Demographics and Customer Characteristics**
- CSS.1.2 Establish Local Customer Service Advisory Body**

- CSS.1.3 Solicit Widespread Customer and Community Input**
- CSS.1.4 Consider Customer Service Satisfaction Information**
- CSS.1.5 Develop Local Customer Service Plan**

CSS.2 Accessibility to Services and Information

- CSS.2.1 Provide Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency**
- CSS.2.2 Provide for Written Material Readability**
- CSS.2.3 Provide Culturally Competent Services**
- CSS.2.4 Provide Access to Services for Persons with Physical Disabilities**
- CSS.2.5 Provide Access to Service Locations**
- CSS.2.6 Provide Self Directed Access to Information**

CSS.3 Outreach to Customers and Communities

- CSS.3.1 Establish a Local Outreach Program Function**
- CSS.3.2 Identify and Assess Target Audiences**
- CSS.3.3 Develop and Maintain an Outreach Program**

CSS.4 Customer Focused Business Processes and Services

- CSS.4.1 Assess Business Processes for Customer Service Opportunities**
- CSS.4.2 Encourage Customer Service Practices by Other Entities Involved in Child Support Program Administration**
- CSS.4.3 Encourage the Participation of Parents**
- CSS.4.4 Promote Customer Oriented Organizational Culture**

CSS.5 Customer Inquiry and Complaint Response

- CSS.5.1 Provide Ombudsperson Program**
- CSS.5.2 Respond to Customer Inquiries and Requests**
- CSS.5.3 Provide Complaint Resolution Process**
- CSS.5.4 Provide Access to the State Hearing Process**

CSS.6 Customer Satisfaction

- CSS.6.1 Solicit Customer Satisfaction Information**
- CSS.6.2 Solicit Employee Job Satisfaction**
- CSS.6.3 Solicit Input from Entities that Interface with the Program**
- CSS.6.4 Assess Public Perceptions About the Program**

Chapter 7—Support of Business Process: Administrative Services

The Administrative Services performance area addresses the functions that are necessary to support the core or essential business and services of the child support program. Administrative Services are those general support functions that must be performed regardless of the types of services provided. The Administrative Services performance area has six primary functions: Automation; Financial Operations; Contracting; Human Resources; Training; and Physical Environment. Each of these functions is further defined by element as follows:

AS.1 Automation

- AS.1.1 Manage Local Consortia Systems (Consortia Lead Agencies)**
- AS.1.2 Manage and Fully Utilize Consortia Systems**
- AS.1.3 Retire Legacy Systems**
- AS.1.4 Ensure Title IV-A/IV-D Program Interface**
- AS.1.5 Optimize Office Automation**
- AS.1.6 Promote Customer Service Using Automation**
- AS.1.7 Execute Operational Recovery Plan**
- AS.1.8 Execute Information Security Plan**

AS.2 Financial Operations

- AS.2.1 Develop Local Agency Budget**
- AS.2.2 Participate in State Budget Development**
- AS.2.3 Participate in State Allocation Process**
- AS.2.4 Execute Final Local Budget Plan**
- AS.2.5 Participate in Statewide Budget Monitoring**
- AS.2.6 Meet IV-D Fund Management Requirements**

AS.3 Contracting

- AS.3.1 Establish Contracting Policies and Practices**
- AS.3.2 Participate in Statewide Contracting Efforts**

AS.4 Human Resources

- AS.4.1 Conduct Human Resource Planning**
- AS.4.2 Manage Personnel System Requirements**
- AS.4.3 Maintain Culturally Competent Organization and Workforce**
- AS.4.4 Maintain Civil Rights Program**
- AS.4.5 Maintain Personnel Policies**
- AS.4.6 Conduct Staff Recognition Program**

AS.5 Training

- AS.5.1 Develop Comprehensive Training Plan**
- AS.5.2 Deliver and Evaluate Training**
- AS.5.3 Provide Professional Development and Recognition**

AS.6 Physical Environment

- AS.6.1 Maintain Office Accessibility**
- AS.6.2 Maintain Optimal Office Design**
- AS.6.3 Maintain Healthy and Safe Environment**

Chapter 8—Improving Organizational Performance

The Improving Organizational Performance area addresses the structure and processes to establish, operate, and maintain the QAPI Program. This performance area focuses on bringing together the structure and tools necessary to implement the QAPI Program. The Improving Organizational Performance area has four primary functions: QAPI

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Structure and Process; Management Information; Quality and Risk Management; and QAPI Oversight and Technical Assistance. Each of these functions is further defined by element as follows:

IOP.1 QAPI Structure and Process

- IOP.1.1 Establish Local Agency Performance Targets**
- IOP.1.2 Establish QAPI Structure**
- IOP.1.3 Establish QAPI Process**
- IOP.1.4 Conduct Required Quarterly Case Reviews**
- IOP.1.5 Develop and Implement Annual QAPI Plan**

IOP.2 Management Information

- IOP.2.1 Select Data Elements**
- IOP.2.2 Collect and Submit Data**
- IOP.2.3 Provide Management Reports**
- IOP.2.4 Analyze and Use Data**
- IOP.2.5 Use Best Practices, Innovations and Research**
- IOP.2.6 Refine Performance Measurement System**

IOP.3 Quality and Risk Management

- IOP.3.1 Implement Business Process Changes**
- IOP.3.2 Employ Risk Management Principles**
- IOP.3.3 Self Report Exceptional Events (Risks)**

IOP.4 QAPI Oversight and Technical Assistance

- IOP.4.1 Conduct QAPI Orientation and Training**
- IOP.4.2 Provide QAPI Assessment Guide**
- IOP.4.3 Establish Review Process**
- IOP.4.4 Establish Review Teams**
- IOP.4.5 Establish Review Protocol and Conduct Reviews**
- IOP.4.6 Participate in Annual Compliance Review**
- IOP.4.7 Participate in Annual Federal Data Reliability Audit**

Together these performance areas, functions, and elements document the work of California's child support program, providing the foundation and shared frame of reference to focus our efforts on performance improvement statewide and locally.

**CHAPTER 3
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

The Leadership and Organization (LO) performance area addresses the most critical aspects of leading, organizing and managing the child support program. The functions and elements identified directly lead to and/or increase the likelihood of attaining the desired program results. The focus is on establishing an organizational vision, operating philosophy, and necessary management structure and processes. The Leadership and Organization performance area has four primary functional areas: Leadership, Organization and Management, Organizational Ethics and Integrity, and Customer Rights and Responsibilities.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to providing effective, efficient and high quality child support services that contribute to the self-sufficiency of families. It is recognized that achievement of this result requires at the state and local level strong leadership, organizational and operating skill, and high standards of conduct. It is further recognized that optimal statewide program results can only be achieved when the entire child support team, including state and local staff, work together with a shared vision committed to excellence and with shared performance expectations. It is with this commitment and shared beliefs that this chapter articulates the key leadership and organizational components necessary for the child support program to succeed.

LO.1 Leadership

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies believe that strong state and local leadership is essential to the success of California's child support program. The statutory scheme establishing the statewide child support program prominently emphasizes the need for strong state leadership. Similarly, the statutory scheme sets much of the vision for the statewide child support program; a program that operates uniformly, consistently, and effectively to ably meet performance and customer expectations. However, it is also clear that the success of the program statewide requires every local child support agency to exert strong local leadership and management skill.

Within the context of the vision for the statewide child support program, DCSS and local child support agencies believe that leaders must be champions of the child support program vision and values. Further, these leaders must articulate their role and the role of their staff in achieving statewide goals, and create the environment within their own organizations to enable fulfillment of the mission. The DCSS and local child support agencies recognize and value the importance of strong state and local leadership and commit to working together and with stakeholders to achieve child support program goals statewide.

LO.1.1 Provide Effective Leadership

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that the director of each local child support agency effectively leads their organization to meet the vision and performance expectations of California's child support program. Local agency directors are important keepers of the vision for the statewide child support program, and illuminate for their staff the important role that they each play in fulfilling the vision and achieving statewide goals. The director also creates the environment within their own organization to enable fulfillment of local performance expectations, thereby contributing to statewide program goals.

Elements that contribute to effective leadership include creating a focused vision, establishing an effective leadership team, creating the environment to succeed, and establishing effective communications.

Standard:

LO.1.1 The director creates an environment within their organization to enable fulfillment of their mission and achievement of performance objectives.

Tasks:

1. Create Operating Vision

The director of each local child support agency champions the vision of the statewide child support program and makes operational the vision within their organizations. The local agency director effectively translates the statewide vision into an organizational plan of operation. The director articulates their operating norms, values and philosophy; the parameters within which their organization will operate; high-level strategies and approaches to achieving the vision; and performance expectations. Within this context, the director ensures that the operating vision, philosophy and approaches are translated into specific action plans.

2. Establish Leadership Team

The director of each local child support agency shall create an effective leadership team with a shared commitment to the mission, vision, and values of the organization. An effective leadership team contains broad expertise, whose members understand each of their roles, responsibilities, and scope of authority. Furthermore, each member has the necessary skills to effectively execute his/her duties and contribute to the functioning of the team. A strong leadership team functions as a team, together possessing the full compliment of necessary skills, and together enabling the organization to achieve its mission.

3. Create Operating Environment

The director of each local child support agency shall create an environment that enables the organization to fulfill its mission and staff to succeed. There are a number of factors that contribute to creating an environment for success including, but not limited to: a clearly articulated organizational vision and sense of purpose; treating people with

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dignity and respect; valuing and practicing inclusion; and sufficient and appropriate deployment of resources. The director and leadership team create an environment in which individuals and the organization can excel.

Performance Measures:

- The local agency director understands the mission, vision, values, and performance goals of the statewide child support program.
- The leadership team demonstrates its functioning as a team.
- Staff understands the organization's mission, vision, and performance goals.
- Staff understands their role in meeting the organization's mission, vision and performance goals.

Compliance Measures:

- N/A.

Authority:

LO.1.2 Establish Strategic Plan

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a strategic plan that clearly articulates purpose, direction, and performance expectations. The DCSS strategic plan for the statewide child support program contains these elements and specific performance objectives. Within this context the director of each local agency shall conduct a planning effort to establish operating goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve performance objectives. An effective strategic planning effort should provide a central focus around which work is planned and organized, enabling translation of the operating vision, philosophy and approaches into action plans and into program achievements.

Standard:

LO.1.2 The local child support agency strategic plan, established with broad stakeholder participation, and has performance objectives and measures aligned with statewide and agency-specific performance expectations.

Tasks:

1. Conduct Strategic Planning

The director of each local child support agency shall at least annually conduct strategic planning to plan and organize work. The strategic planning process should, consistent with the DCSS strategic plan, result in identification of the vision, values and mission; goals and performance objectives; and implementation strategies and/or action plans. The local agency strategic plan, together with any related supporting plans, should clearly articulate the direction, purpose, performance objectives, and measures.

2. Promote Participation in Planning

The director of each local child support agency shall solicit broad participation in their strategic planning efforts. Local agencies should include staff, customers, stakeholders and the community at large in developing, implementing, and communicating strategic plans. A clearly articulated vision and approach is a valuable tool in setting and managing expectations. A collaborative strategic planning effort also should lead to providing services in a manner that is responsive to the needs of customers and the community.

3. Produce Strategic Plan

Each local child support agency shall produce a strategic plan that provides the performance roadmap for the organization. Further, the strategic plan of each local agency shall be consistent with statewide performance objectives, and reflect the specific performance targets established through its Plan of Cooperation with DCSS. The strategic plan is an important reflection of the organization's values and priorities.

4. Develop Action Plans

The director of each local child support shall ensure that strategies and action plans are developed detailing specific courses of action for achieving performance targets. The strategies and action plans must be specific, denoting person's responsible, specific steps to be taken, and establishing timeframes. The action plans reflect the critically important methods for achieving performance objectives.

Performance Measures:

- The local child support agency engages collaborative strategic planning processes.
- The local child support agency strategic plan aligns with state strategic plan and POC-specific performance objectives and targets.

Compliance Measures:

- Strategic Plan and performance targets in place
- Process in place to track and measure progress in meeting goals and objectives.

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

LO.1 LEADERSHIP

LO.1.1 Provide Effective Leadership

LO.1.2 Establish Strategic Plan

LO.2 Organization and Management

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies believe that attainment of optimal program results is highly dependent on effective state and local organizational and management skills. Local agencies operate within differing environments and face differing recruitment, skill, geographic, and socio-economic challenges. Despite these differences, organization and management appear to have the greatest impact on child support program performance. Therefore, state and local leaders are committed to learning, developing and using organizational and management skills throughout those organizations that are effective in achieving optimal performance.

LO.2.1 Create Effective Organizational Structure

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that the director of each local child support agency establishes an organizational structure that enables effective deployment of resources and facilitates achievement of performance objectives. Local agencies should be organized in a manner that supports the work to be performed, including the uniform, consistent and accurate application of policies and procedures. The director of each local agency exercises leadership through an effective and functional organizational structure.

Standard:

LO.2.1 The local agency has an organizational structure enabling effective and efficient deployment of resources and the achievement of performance goals.

Tasks:

1. Create Organizational Structure

The director of each local child support agency shall establish an organizational structure that enables accomplishment of performance objectives. The organizational structure should, among other things: facilitate effective workflow; align inter-related functions; facilitate communication within and between functions; delineate areas of responsibility; and illuminate functional connectivity and dependencies. The organizational structure should also reflect the values of the organization in terms of prominence, titles, and functional descriptions. Further, the organizational structure should reflect performance goals and the statewide-targeted program functions delineated in DCSS allocation letters and related directives. An effective organizational structure supports the work to be performed.

2. Effectively Deploy Staff and Other Resources

The director of each local child support agency shall secure and deploy staff and other resources necessary to operate their organization to achieve performance goals. It is also recognized that local agencies operate within an environment in which resources may be limited. Nevertheless, the local agency director should carefully evaluate staffing in terms of numbers, types and mix (i.e., casework, attorney, investigative, administrative and support), function (i.e., program, including locate, establishment, modification, and enforcement, and administration) and overall deployment. This includes deployment of resources necessary to achieve the purpose and intent of statewide-targeted functions. Effective deployment of staff and other resources likely will change as needs change and will require each local agency director to continually seek opportunities to improve the way in which the child support business is conducted.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has organizational structure enabling effective and efficient resource deployment and goal attainment.

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- Local agency organizational structure facilitates coordination, communication, and collaboration among units.

Compliance Measures:

- Effective resource deployment.

- Resource deployment consistent with statewide-targeted program directives.

Authority:

LO.2.2 Create Effective Management Structure

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes an effective management structure. The director of each local agency shall guide organizational development and exercise leadership through creation of a well functioning management structure and team. The management structure enables the organization to achieve its performance goals.

Standard:

LO.2.2 The local child support agency has a management structure that facilitates effective workflow, communication, and removal of barriers necessary to meet performance goals.

Tasks:

1. Develop Management Structure

The director of each local child support agency shall establish a management structure that facilitates accomplishment of the child support business and achievement of performance goals. The management structure provides the cohesion that effectively integrates and coordinates the various units and activities within the organization. The management team and structure should demonstrate skill in interpreting and executing policies and procedures; managing resources and internal operations; ensuring effective delivery of services; and ensuring accountability to customers and the public.

2. Develop Management Team

The director of each local child support agency shall establish a management team with the skills and abilities necessary to accomplish program goals and performance expectations. The management team leads, manages and oversees the organization's daily operations. It is important that leaders guide and develop managers to become effective members of a functioning management team. Attributes of an effective management team include, but are not limited to: shared vision, values and commitment; willingness and desire to collaborate and partner to achieve outcomes; and recognition of individual and team skills necessary to be successful.

3. Establish Effective Internal Communications

The director of each local child support agency shall create a communication structure that facilitates the timely exchange of information. The director and leadership team promote communications at all levels within the organization, i.e., up, down, and across, and make effective communication a priority. Local agencies should establish well-defined communication patterns and modes including, but not limited to: regular and ad hoc meetings and meeting protocols; procedures for sharing meeting artifacts, i.e., agenda, minutes, distribution lists, etc., and; procedures for distribution of written documents, i.e., policy letters, informational letters, newsletters, and other information. Establishing and using clear and well-understood patterns of communication is key to organizational effectiveness.

Performance Measures:

- The local agency has a well functioning management structure and team.
- The local agency has established and well-defined formal and informal patterns of communication.

Compliance Measures:

- Attainment of performance objectives in accordance with local agency's strategic plan and Plan of Cooperation with DCSS.

Authority:

LO.2.3 Create Effective Organizational Linkages

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes effective linkages with external entities involved in operation of the program. The child support program operates with a large number of partners that assist in administration and/or in other ways interface with the program. Local agencies must establish effective organizational linkages with these external partners to achieve optimal performance.

Standard:

LO.2.3 The local child support agency has organizational linkage with external parties necessary to achieve optimal performance.

Tasks:

1. Establish Organizational Linkages

Each local child support agency shall establish and maintain linkages with external entities that assist in administration of the child support program. The linkages include child support parental and children's advocacy organizations, Title IV-A agency, courts, employers, birthing hospitals, and numerous third party interfaces such as financial institutions, taxing agencies, licensing bodies. The effectiveness of these linkages is critical to optimal achievement of performance goals.

2. Participate In State Level Governance

Each local child support agency shall establish and maintain appropriate linkages with DCSS and the California Child Support Directors Association (CSDA). These linkages provide access to important information, directives and operating guidelines. The DCSS/CSDA Concept of Operations and Communication document outlines expectations, roles and responsibilities of local agencies, CSDA and DCSS. In addition, DCSS Regional Administrators serve as an important information and communication link between all parties.

3. Establish Local Government Linkages

Each child support agency shall establish and maintain appropriate linkages with local government entities that assist and/or perform work on their behalf. These linkages include centralized personnel offices, county auditors and controllers, central technical and administrative support offices, and Boards and County Executive Offices. Effective local linkages are critical to optimal achievement of performance goals.

Performance Measures:

- The local agency has regular contact with advocacy organizations that serve child support services customers and maintains a regular process for receiving input from and providing feedback to them.

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- The local agency has linkages with external entities necessary to effectively operate the program.

Compliance Measures:

- N/A.

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

LO.2 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

LO.2.1 Create Effective Organizational Structure

LO.2.2 Create Effective Management Structure

LO.2.3 Create Effective Organizational Linkages

LO.3 Organizational Ethics and Integrity

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize the importance of adhering to standards of organizational ethics and integrity. The child support program operates in an emotional environment in which the parties involved often have differing and/or conflicting views and interests. It is therefore particularly incumbent upon child support professionals to establish and maintain standards of organizational ethics and integrity that demand fair and equitable treatment of all involved parties. It is also appropriate to promote adherence to the same standards of conduct within the organization between staff as well as externally with customers and the public.

LO.3.1 Promote Ethical Conduct

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and adheres to the highest standards of ethical conduct. Standards of ethical conduct should apply to professional behavior in conducting child support business, internal office relationships between staff, and prohibition of, or the appearance of, conflicts of interest.

Standard:

LO.3.1 The local child support agency has the highest standards of ethical conduct and prohibition of conflicts of interest.

Tasks:

1. Establish Code of Ethics

The director of each local child support agency shall establish policies and practices that appropriately ensure ethical conduct in performing the child support program business. Adherence to high standards of ethical conduct should apply in interactions with staff and between staff, as well as with customers, child support program stakeholders, and the public. Local agencies should develop and adhere to these ethical conduct standards.

2. Establish Conflict of Interest Policy

The director of each local child support agency shall establish a conflict of interest policy for staff and consultants pursuant to federal, state and/or local government requirements. Conflict of interest policies prohibit the use of one's position for personal gain. In addition, local agencies shall establish policies and procedures to delineate the circumstances in which a staff member or the agency may not be involved in case actions and/or decision-making due to personal interest or other covered circumstance.

3. Establish Nepotism Policy

The director of each local child support agency shall establish a nepotism policy for staff and consultants pursuant to federal, state, and/or local government requirements.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency adheres to the highest standards of ethical conduct and prohibits conflicts of interest.

Compliance Measures:

- Code of ethics in place.
- Conflict of interest policy in place.
- Nepotism policy in place

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Authority:

LO.3.2 Promote Integrity in Decision-Making

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency adheres to professional decision-making based on fair, equitable, and consistent application of rules governing operation of the child support program. Local agency decision-making should be characterized by adherence to the highest standards of integrity.

Standard:

LO.3.2 The local child support agency applies business rules fairly, equitably, consistently and without preferential treatment.

Tasks:

1. Integrity in Decision-Making

The director of each local child support agency shall establish policies and practices to ensure that professional decision-making is based on business rules. Business decisions shall be characterized by integrity in fairly, equitably and consistently applying rules. Such integrity is intended to ensure the priority of professional responsibilities over personal interests or beliefs.

Performance Measures:

- The local agency shall establish and adhere to the highest standards of integrity in professional decision-making.

Compliance Measures:

- Adherence to laws and regulations pertaining to fairness and equity.

Authority:

**BEST PRACTICES
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

LO.3 ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

LO.3.1 Promote Ethical Conduct

LO.3.2 Promote Integrity in Decision-Making

LO.4 Customer Rights and Responsibilities

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies value our customers and support their right to receive excellent child support program services. It is recognized that child support program customers have rights that should be protected, and responsibilities that should be effectively communicated. DCSS and local agencies are committed to ensuring that customers are fully informed, treated in an appropriate manner, and receive all services to which they are entitled.

LO.4.1 Promote Customer Rights

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency informs all persons receiving child support services of their rights and responsibilities. Each person receiving services should be well informed about the services offered, their responsibilities in receiving services, and their rights. Customer rights include, but may not be limited to: child support services free of charge; language assistance free of charge; culturally competent services; assistance for persons with disabilities; civil rights protections; and access to complaint resolution and state hearing processes.

Standard:

LO.4.1 The local child support agency informs customers of their rights and responsibilities.

Tasks:

1. Treat Customers with Dignity and Respect

The director of each local child support agency shall create and maintain a child support program environment that ensures all customers are treated with dignity and respect. Further, local agencies shall promote a workplace environment that recognizes each customer as an individual with unique personal and service needs.

2. Protect Customer Rights

The director of each local child support agency shall establish policies, procedures, and practices requiring adherence to the highest standards in protecting the rights of each customer. Local agencies shall promote a workplace environment that protects the rights of each customer at all times.

3. Promote Customer Rights and Responsibilities

The director of each local child support agency shall ensure effective communication with customers about their individual rights and responsibilities. Local agencies shall appropriately post information in local offices, distribute informing notices, and/or otherwise use effective methods to communicate customer rights and responsibilities.

4. Promote Access to Services

Each local child support agency shall provide services and information that is accessible and offered in a culturally competent service environment. Each local agency shall implement actions necessary under DCSS civil rights and customer service regulations, and/or other related directives.

5. Encourage Participation of Both Parents

Each local child support agency shall encourage the participation and active involvement of both parents in decision-making about their child support case.

Performance Measures:

- The local agency informs customers of the child support program of their rights and responsibilities.
- The local agency encourages the participation of both parents to the extent possible and appropriate.

Compliance Measures:

- Child support services are provided free of charge.
- Language assistance is available free of charge to person with limited English proficiency.
- Culturally competent services are provided.
- Child support services are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Civil rights of child support program customer are protected.
- Customers are informed of and have access to complaint resolution and state hearing processes.
- LCSA's meet civil rights requirements applicable to federal and state funded programs.

Authority:

- Federal Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- California Code of Regulations.
- Americans with Disabilities Act.

LO.4.2 Protect Customer Confidentiality

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency protects the confidentiality of information about customers served and information contained in their files.

Standard:

LO.4.2 The local child support agency protects the confidentiality of customers and their files.

Tasks:

1. Protect Confidentiality Requirements

The director of each local child support agency shall establish policies, procedures, and practices to protect the confidentiality of persons served and the confidentiality of their case information. Local agencies shall take additional precautions when domestic violence is indicated. Local agencies shall ensure access to customer information and records only by persons duly authorized. This includes ensuring that inquiries made on behalf of customers have necessary authorizations from the customer. Further, local agencies shall give particular attention to protecting access to customer information using automated systems or applications, and in contracting for services that assist in performing child support program operations.

2. Protect Client Privacy

Each local child support agency shall ensure that customer privacy and individual customer information is protected when engaged in research, customer satisfaction surveys, or other information or data collection efforts. Due regard shall be given for the customer's privacy and right to refuse to participate in research, surveys, or customer service inquiries. Any research should be conducted under standards established in state and federal law.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality and privacy of customers and their case information.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency protects the confidentiality of customers served and their files.
- Local agency protects customer privacy.

Authority:

- Federal and state confidentiality requirements.

**BEST PRACTICES
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

LO.4 CUSTOMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

LO.4.1 Promote Customer Rights

LO.4.2 Protect Customer Confidentiality

CHAPTER 4 BUSINESS PROCESS AND SERVICES CASE MANAGEMENT

This chapter addresses the Case Management performance area, one of three essential business process and services areas that comprise the child support program. The other two areas, which are addressed in subsequent chapters, are Financial Management and Customer Service and Satisfaction. Together these three performance areas comprise the essential business processes and services of the child support program.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to providing effective, efficient and highest quality case management services for our customers. The statutory scheme establishing the statewide child support program sets the vision for the program; a program that operates uniformly, consistently, and effectively to ably meet performance and customer expectations. The DCSS, in collaboration with local child agencies and other stakeholders, is developing regulations governing all child support business processes. The goal is to achieve uniformity of practice in providing child support services that are responsive to individual customer needs while treating all parties fairly and equitably.

The DCSS and local agencies recognize that case management is critical in providing effective child support services and achieving high levels of customer service and satisfaction. The work must be performed in a manner that bases case management decision-making on the circumstances and events unique to each case. The challenge to superior performance is to process large numbers of cases and information in a manner that remains personal and responsive to individual customer needs. The DCSS and local agencies are committed to creating and maintaining case management practices that allow for, recognize and respond to the changing circumstances of parents and families.

The Case Management performance area has four primary functional areas: Case Initiation and Update, Establishment and Modification, Enforcement, and Locate. These functions are further defined through delineation of elements and tasks.

CM.1 Case Initiation and Update

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies share the belief that the case intake and initiation process is critically important to enabling the provision of effective child support program services. The DCSS and local agencies believe that customers are entitled to timely, accurate and effective services. This means that our efforts are focused on recognizing and responding to the individual needs of customers, providing timely responses to inquiries and applications for service, and accurately and completely developing and recording information to establish paternity and appropriate support orders.

Further, the DCSS and local agencies believe that both parents should be involved in the case initiation process at the earliest possible time. Therefore, we seek the involvement of both parents because it results in greater accuracy in determining and assessing their current circumstances and establishing an appropriate support order. When the identity or location of a parent is unknown, we actively seek useful information that enables identification and/or location of the parent necessary to establish paternity and/or a support order, and/or locate the person or assets. Early involvement of both parents also permits greater understanding of the child support process and the need for parents to timely and accurately update information when circumstances change. It is our belief that parents who are involved in the child support process are more likely to meet their responsibilities.

And, finally, DCSS and local agencies believe that the intake and case initiation process is key to gathering the right information to understand the special needs of parents. Special needs may result from limited English proficiency, age, disability, condition including victims of family violence, or other factors. Early identification and documentation of special needs will effectively guide interaction with the customer over the life of the child support case.

CM.1.1 Provide Application

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely responds to an application request or referral for services. Local agencies shall provide a IV-D application when requested by a potential customer or when a referral from the court is received. The application shall be provided to the potential customer or customer in the most time efficient manner available.

Standard:

CM.1.1 The local child support agency timely provides an application and general information about the program in response to a request or referral.

Tasks:

1. Provide Application

Each local child support agency shall timely provide a IV-D application when a request or court referral is received. The date the request is received and the date the application package is sent to the applicant is recorded. The application and related materials should be available in appropriate languages or accessible through other translation services for persons that are limited English proficient.

2. Provide Customer Information

Each local child support agency shall include other information when providing a IV-D application. The application packet shall contain information on customer rights and responsibilities including the Child Support Handbook, Ombudsperson Program, local complaint resolution, and state hearing processes.

Performance Measures:

- Number and percentage of cases where application is provided in accordance with compliance requirement time frames.

Compliance Measures:

- Provide the applicant an application form within five business days of receiving a written or telephone request or on the day it is requested in person.
- Provide program information describing services and fees, rights and responsibilities, and cost recovery and distribution policies to Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, Temporary Aid to Needy Families/CalWORKs, foster care, or Medicaid/Medically Needy only recipients within five business days.

Authority:

- CCR 112100-112110.
- FC 17306,17310, 17312, 17406, 17415.
- 45 CFR 302.33, 303.2, 302.31.

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- WIC 11477.

CM.1.2 Initiate or Respond to Request for IV-D Services

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency promptly responds to all applications and referrals. Local agencies shall initiate action promptly and in a manner that consistently, appropriately and systematically moves to case initiation. Case initiation begins with receipt of a request for IV-D services from the IV-A agency sending a welfare referral application, the custodial parent or non-custodial parent sending a IV-D application, another state sending an interstate referral, or a court referral. Each local agency shall seek to obtain the best information possible in initiating the case and establishing the case record.

Standard:

CM.1.2 The local child support agency responds expeditiously to initiate case management upon receipt of an application or other case initiating documentation from any source.

Tasks:

The process for initiating or responding to requests for IV-D services is different for welfare and non-welfare cases; each is described separately.

Welfare Cases

1. Interview Applicant

Each local child support agency shall timely Interview the parent that is the applicant for Title IV-D services to collect information pertinent to the child support case. The IV-A agency referral should include the 2.1Q (Support Questionnaire) and CA 371 (Referral) information. Local child support agencies are required to interview applicants in the IV-A office at the time of application. While this can be accomplished through a telephone interview, local agencies are encouraged to conduct these interviews in person. Early contact with applicants as well as interviews conducted in a manner that yields complete and useful information is critically important. (exceptions for foster care case)

2. Conduct Initial Research

Each local child support agency shall complete initial research to determine if a child support case already exists or if a new case should be created. There are three steps in this process that include:

(a) Clear Participant

Research the child support system including Federal Case Registry, to find out if participants already exist. If participant already exists, update with any new information received.

(b) Create New Participant

When the participants are not found in the child support system, new participants are created. Unique identifiers are assigned to any new participants.

(c) Identify if Case Exists

Research the child support system for possible matching cases (those linked to the participants identified). Verify the roles of each participant per case found, and identify if the existing case is a match (follow the federal definition of a case—case construct rules). If the case matches, verify if it is closed, updating it to open if necessary. If the decision is made not to reopen the case, enter reason on chronology. Update any other case or order information received. Link new participants to existing case. Generate notices to the appropriate parties.

3. Open New Case

Each local child support agency shall update the system with new case information (case number, type, status), and give new case a unique identifier. The local agency also shall establish the link between participants and case, and record any available application information into the system (e.g., IV-A and IV-E case numbers). Title IV-A program referrals may include children that reflect a non-aid status, such as Maximum Family Grant, non-aid Social Security or NonFederal Foster Care. Include in the case history what services are to be provided. Send notices to the caseworker when intervention is needed for process to move forward. Set reminder notifications to caseworker, as appropriate.

4. Information to Federal Case Registry

Each local child support agency shall transmit to and register on the Federal Case Registry all new IV-D cases and all participants associated with those cases. Check for existing case in Federal Case Registry. Notify the Federal Case Registry of additional changes or deletions to the information provided to the Federal Case Registry within five business days of receipt of new or changed information. Flag the case for domestic violence, if applicable.

5. Interface with Paternity Opportunity Program

Each local child support agency shall, in all IV-D cases where paternity is at issue, review the statewide Paternity Opportunity Program database of filed declarations of paternity prior to filing a summons and complaint with the court system. The DCSS provides updates to the database to local child support agencies on a monthly basis.

6. Locate Activities

Refer to CM.4 Locate Activities to initiate locate efforts as appropriate.

Non-Welfare Cases

1. Initiate Case

Each local child support agency shall initiate case action upon receipt of an application for IV-D services (i.e., IV-D application, or interstate referral or court referral). The application should contain information regarding the case, participant, or order. Interstate referrals are received via the Child Support Enforcement Network. Hard copy documentation follows and is reviewed for completeness.

2. Conduct Initial Research

Each local child support agency shall complete initial research to determine if a child support case already exists or if a new case should be created. There are three steps in this process that include:

(a) Clear Participant

Research the child support system to find out if participants already exist. If participant already exists, update with any new information received.

(b) Create New Participant

When the participants are not found in the child support system, new participants are created. Unique identifiers are assigned to any new participants.

(c) Identify if Case Exists

Research the child support system for possible matching cases (those linked to the participants identified). Verify the roles of each participant per case found, and identify if the existing case is a match (follow the federal definition of a case—case construct rules). If the case matches, verify if it is closed, updating it to open if necessary. If the decision is made not to reopen the case, enter reason on chronology. Update any other case or order information received. Link new participants to existing case. Generate notices to the appropriate parties.

3. Open New Case

Each local child support program shall update the system with new case information (case number, type, status), and give new case a unique identifier. The local agency shall establish the link between participants and case. Record any available application information into the system (e.g., order information, IV-A and IV-E case numbers). Include in the case history what services are to be provided. Send notices to the caseworker when intervention is needed for process to move forward. Set reminder notifications to caseworker, as appropriate.

4. Information to Federal Case Registry

Each local child support agency shall transmit and register to the Federal Case Registry all new IV-D cases and non-IV-D orders, and all participants associated with those cases and orders. Notify the Federal Case Registry of additional changes or deletions

to the information provided to the Federal Case Registry within five business days of receipt from the IV-D agency of new or changed information. Flag the case for domestic violence, if applicable.

5. Interface with Paternity Opportunity Program

Each local child support agency shall, in all IV-D cases where paternity is at issue, review the statewide Paternity Opportunity Program database of filed declarations of paternity prior to filing a summons and complaint with the court system. The DCSS provides updates to the database to local child support agencies on a monthly basis.

6. Interview Applicant

Each local child support agency shall timely interview the parent that is the applicant for Title IV-D services to collect information pertinent to the child support case. Local agencies are encouraged to conduct in person interviews; however, a telephone interview is acceptable if done for the convenience of the parent.

7. Initiate Locate Efforts as Appropriate

Refer to CM.4.4 Locate Activities to initiate locate efforts as appropriate.

Performance Measures:

- Number and percentage of children/cases opened still needing paternity establishment during a specific time period.
- Number and percentage of cases opened with complete, verified locate and income information.

Compliance Measures:

- Within five working days of receiving a written or telephone request, or on the day it is requested in person, provide the individual with an application form.
- Within five working days of IV -A referral, provide program information describing services and fees, rights and responsibilities, and cost recovery and distribution policies to IV -A (TANF/CalWORKs), foster care, and Medicaid/Medi-Cal recipients.
- Accept a signed application form on the day it is received.
- Within ten calendar days of receipt of IV -A referral or non-welfare application, interview custodial parent or the non-custodial parent, if that individual is the applicant for IV-D services to obtain information necessary to pursue paternity and establish an order.
- Within 20 calendar days of receipt of IV -A referral or non-welfare application, open a case and solicit and/or verify information sufficient to move the case to the next appropriate action.

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- For interstate cases, within ten working days of the receipt of a request for service, generate a response notifying initiating IV-D agency of need for additional information and/or corrections and notify the caseworker to take required action.

Authority:

- CCR 112100-112110, 112130, 112140, 112300, 112301, 112302.
- FC 7573, 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400, 17405, 17406, 17415.
- 45 CFR 302.33; 303.2, 303.5, 302.31.
- CSS Letter 02-11.

CM.1.3 Update System with Information Received

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely distributes and accurately records relevant information received from various sources. Local agencies shall have in place policies and procedures to timely act upon information received about a case.

Standard:

CM.1.3 The local child support agency has established procedures to ensure that case related information received by the agency is handled responsively, addressed timely and recorded accurately.

Task:

1. Update System with Information Received

Each local child support agency shall timely and accurately update case records when new information is received. Update requests are received from a variety of sources, including but not limited to, participant, IV-A agency, U.S. Postal Service, employer, Department of Health Services, court, or other entity or jurisdiction. There may be updates to addresses, names, employer information or any other data kept in the system. Updates shall be timely recorded and other parties appropriately notified including, but may not be limited to: caseworker; IV-A agency for key information on IV-A cases; and the other jurisdiction for interstate cases.

Performance Measures:

- Whether or not the local child support agency updates system in accordance with compliance requirement time frames.

Compliance Measures:

- Act immediately, but no longer than 75 calendar days, on new information that may assist in locating the non-custodial parent or the non-custodial parent's assets and earnings.

Authority:

- CCR 113100.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17502, 17505, 17506.
- 42, USC 653.
- 45 CFR 303.3, 303.7, 303.15, 303.35, 303.69, 303.70.

CM.1.4 Transfer Cases

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has case transfer processes that uniformly result in complete and accurate transfer of cases from one county to another. Local agencies shall conduct case transfers in a manner that complies with all requirements and is accomplished in the most expeditious manner.

Standard:

CM.1.4 The local child support agency participates in appropriate transfer actions consistently with all other counties as defined by those requirements.

Tasks:

1. Transfer Cases

Each local child support agency shall transfer cases from one county to another when policy criteria are met. For Title IV-A cases, case ownership follows the custodial parent's place of residence. For non Title IV-A cases, case ownership resides in the county where the custodial party last opened a Title IV-D case. The transferring of a case involves reassignment of the case to the appropriate county, and the transfer of hard copy documents. The use of scanning and digital signatures should alleviate the need for hard copy document transfers.

2. Transfer Responding Interstate Case

Each local child support agency shall transfer interstate cases from one county to another when policy criteria are met. In a responding interstate case, the case follows the non-custodial parent.

Performance Measures:

- Cases are transferred according to policy directives.
- Duplicate cases are resolved and eliminated.

Compliance Measures:

- Compliance with case transfer policy.

Authority:

- CSS Letter 02-XX (number pending).
- FSD Letters 99-04, 95-10, 94-33, 94-08.
- 45 CFR 303.7.

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CASE MANAGEMENT
CM.1 CASE INITIATION AND UPDATE**

CM.1.1 Provide Application

- Promote opportunities for self-service electronic capability for individuals to obtain application forms and information for IV -D services.
- Generate an appointment letter to the applicant at the time a request for application is received to encourage personal contact and to set up required interview.

CM.1.2 Initiate or Respond to Request for IV-D Services

- Maximize early opportunities to interface with various reliable sources of identity and locate and asset information, including the Medi-Cal database, Department of Motor Vehicles, credit reporting agencies, utility companies, etc. to clearly identify target individuals and provide information needed in establishing and enforcing orders.
- Promote in person interviews of Title IV-A program clients, with IV-D caseworkers conducting the interviews on-site at the IV-A office whenever possible. If resources do not permit on-site co-location, other options should be explored including telephone interviews and video-conferencing.
- Enhance interview skills of staff conducting interviews with participants. Develop specific targeted questions to solicit information on obligor's work history and ability to pay.
- Screen for family violence to determine if there is or has been family violence and if applicable, activate the family violence indicator.

CM.1.3 Update System with Information Received

- Establish mechanisms to notify all caseworkers associated with cases involving a particular obligor when information concerning the obligor is received.
- Timely notification (within five business days of receipt) of changes or deletions to information provided to the Federal Case Registry; and the ability to accept and process all administrative information received from the Federal Case Registry (e.g., rejections, warnings, social security number verification or identification results and domestic violence indicator).

CM.1.4 Transfer Cases

CM.2 Establishment and Modification

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize the importance of establishing and maintaining accurate and timely orders that meet the needs of children. Establishment of orders for paternity, child support, and medical support, as well as the review and adjustment of those orders as circumstances change, is critical in ensuring that children are provided with necessary financial and medical support. The DCSS and local agencies will proactively seek to establish timely and accurate paternity and support orders, and modify support orders based upon changes in the circumstances of the family. There is a shared commitment to decision-making based on the initial assessment process as well as subsequent information gathered and received to ensure that child support customers are well served.

CM.2.1 Generate Summons and Complaint and Proposed Judgment and/or Petition

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that, once the non-custodial parent is located, the local child support agency begins the process of establishing an accurate, legally valid order.

Standard:

CM.2.1 The local child support agency, based on sound evidence, seeks a determination for paternity and an appropriate child support amount and medical support provision, as applicable, reflecting the circumstances of the case.

Tasks:

1. Determine Whether Paternity Is At Issue

Each local child support agency shall determine if paternity is at issue by reviewing case information and the Paternity Opportunity Program database.

2. Determine Support Order Evidence

Each local child support agency shall, based upon the services requested, calculate the guideline child support amount. Local agencies shall actively seek to determine income and expense information from the alleged father/non-custodial parent and/or custodial parent. If income or work history is known, that information is used for calculating the statewide uniform guideline for determining child support. If after using all investigative methods and available data sources, income or work history remains unknown, a presumed income amount based on the Minimum Basic Standard of Adequate Care is used. Relying on presumed income is always a last resort.

Other types of services requested include, but are not limited to, establishing paternity, child support obligation per child, medical support, welfare arrears and childcare orders.

3. Generate Summons and Complaint

Each local child support agency shall generate the summons and complaint and proposed judgment or Petition, once the determination of what to plead and the appropriate guideline calculation is completed. The summons and complaint and proposed judgment or Petition and other appropriate legal documents are sent to court for filing and a superior court number is assigned. If a summons and complaint was previously dismissed without prejudice and it is appropriate to reinitiate, a new summons and complaint and proposed judgment or Petition will be generated.

4. Generate Amended or Supplemental Complaint

Each local child support agency shall, at times, be required to generate an amended or supplemental complaint. An amended complaint is filed prior to a judgment being entered with the court. Usually this is done when the information on the original summons and complaint must be changed. A supplemental complaint may be filed in an action in which an order for paternity and/or support (past due child support, ongoing

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and/or health insurance) of child(ren) of the same parents exists. The supplemental complaint is filed in lieu of a new action to establish paternity and/or a support order for children for whom no order exists. It can be filed any time after the original judgment has been entered. A supplemental proposed judgment is included which specifies an amount owed for past support as well as an ongoing amount on presumed or actual income. The process is the same as generating a summons and complaint and proposed judgment.

Performance Measures:

- Percent or number of summons and complaints generated versus those sent out for service.
- Average length of time between generation of summons and complaints and sending out for service.

Compliance Measures:

- Complete within 90 calendar days of the location of the alleged father or non-custodial parent, regardless of whether paternity has been established, service of process necessary to proceed to establish a support order and, if necessary, paternity; establish an order for support which may be based on a voluntary acknowledgement of paternity; or document unsuccessful attempts to serve process in accord with the Department of Child Support Services diligent efforts guidelines.

Authority:

- MPP 12-106, 12-223, 12-228.
- FC 3651, 7540,7541, 7610-7614, 7573, 3750-3753, 3901, 4009, 4055-4076, 17401-17406, 17410, 17428.
- CCP 1013.
- 45 CFR 303.31, 303.4, 303.5, 303.101.
- WIC 11452, 11452.018.

CM.2.2 Conduct Service of Process

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency serves the alleged father or non-custodial parent with a civil lawsuit to establish paternity and/or a support order. The method of the service of process should provide the opportunity to respond and increase opportunities that the establishment process is fair and appropriate.

Standard:

CM.2.2 The local child support agency carries out Service of Process in a manner that is legally appropriate and ensures that the alleged father or non-custodial parent is aware of the civil action.

Tasks:

1. Attempt Service of Process

Each local child support agency shall serve a copy of the summons and complaint and proposed judgment or Petition on the alleged father/non-custodial parent. The summons and complaint and proposed judgment or Petition is generated and the alleged father/non-custodial parent's location (physical or employer address) is known. The law requires that a non-custodial parent be given legally sufficient notice that a civil lawsuit has been filed against him/her. There are several types of valid service, the most common are personal service, substitute service, certified mail, registered mail, military, and long arm. This process should occur repeatedly if previous attempts to serve the alleged father/non-custodial parent have failed. The custodial parent and/or other jurisdiction must be notified of attempt of service and its results, as appropriate.

2. Update Service Information

Each local child support agency shall capture the results of all service attempts. The results may vary depending upon whether or not the service was completed successfully, and how service was accomplished. Update the system with the date alleged father/non-custodial parent was served from the proof of service form (in-office services); the date alleged father/non-custodial parent signed the registered mail receipt, certified mail receipt, or the signed date of the Notice and Acknowledgement of Receipt (service by mail), and the date alleged father/non-custodial parent served or the dated of due diligence noting failed service of the alleged father/non-custodial parent (other entity or process server). The Proof of Service and/or Notice of Acknowledgement of Receipt is sent to court for filing and notification of the service results are sent to the custodial parent and/or other jurisdiction as appropriate.

If multiple attempts at service have been unsuccessful, the local child support agency should seek to locate the alleged father/non-custodial parent.

Performance Measures:

- Number/percent of cases served versus those needing service.

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- Average length of time between filing of complaint and service.
- Number/percent of summons filed versus summons returned.
- Number/percent of cases/non-custodial parents served versus cases disposed.

Compliance Measures:

- Within 60 calendar days from the date the applicant provides the local child support agency with the alleged father/non-custodial parent's residence address or employer information, the local child support agency shall take appropriate action to serve or attempt to serve the summons and complaint. The local child support agency must also provide written notification to the applicant of the action taken or the inability to take action because of inaccurate or outdated information.
- Complete within 90 calendar days of the location of the alleged father or non-custodial parent, regardless of whether paternity has been established, service of process necessary to proceed to establish a support order and, if necessary, paternity; establish an order for support which may be based on a voluntary acknowledgement of paternity; or document unsuccessful attempts to serve process in accord with Department of Child Support Services diligent effort guidelines.
- Record and track the time from successful service of process to obligation establishment or other case disposition, to ensure that expedited process time frames are met, i.e., 75 percent in 6 months and 90 percent in 12 months.

Authority:

- MPP 12-101.3, 12-106, 12-109, 12-211, 12-223.
- FC 17401, 17406, 17212.
- CCP 415.10, 415.40.
- 45 CFR 303.3 (c), 303.4.

CM.2.3 Receive Answer or Other Response

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency proceeds to establish paternity when the alleged father or non-custodial parent files a formal answer or indicates his willingness to participate in the establishment process.

Standard:

CM.2.3 The local child support agency takes proactive steps to respond to cases in which the alleged father or non-custodial parent questions the issues set forth within the complaint. All appropriate steps are taken to determine whether pleadings, as proposed in the original action, are appropriate.

Tasks:

1. Receive Answer or Other Response

Each local child support agency shall timely respond to answers or other responses to complaints served on the alleged father/non-custodial parent. An answer to the complaint may be filed with the court by the alleged father/non-custodial parent or the alleged father/non-custodial parent's attorney. Or, the alleged father/non-custodial parent may indicate a willingness to cooperate and work with the local child support agency to resolve the issues set forth within the complaint. The system is updated with all pertinent dates of the filed documents as well as information concerning the actions, statements of the alleged father/non-custodial parent or their attorney.

2. Generate and File Notice of Motion or Order to Show Cause

Each local child support agency shall generate a Notice of Motion or Order to Show Cause upon receipt of the alleged father/non-custodial parent's filing of an answer. The legal documents are sent to court for filing and obtaining a court hearing date. The system is updated with the file date and court hearing date and the documents are served on the non-custodial parent/non-custodial parent's attorney with copies of the filed document sent to the custodial parent and/or other jurisdiction.

3. Schedule DNA Testing

Each local child support agency shall schedule genetic testing if the alleged father/non-custodial parent denies paternity in his answer or requests genetic testing. Genetic testing is scheduled for the alleged father/non-custodial parent, custodial parent and child(ren) of the action. If necessary, the court will issue an order for genetic testing. Genetic testing is scheduled and conducted by a designated laboratory. The members, who may include the alleged father, custodial parent and/or other jurisdiction and other entity, are notified of the pending appointments. The system is updated with the appointment dates.

Performance Measures:

- Number of cases served and answers received.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency takes timely and appropriate action when answer or other response to complaint is received.

Authority:

- MPP 12-106, 12-223.
- FC 7540,7541, 7610-7614, 3625, 17404, 17406.
- 45 CFR 303.5, 303.4.

CM.2.4 Attend Court Hearing

The intent of this functional element is to ensure each local child support agency shall timely resolve disputes on the issues within the complaint through a court hearing.

Standard:

CM.2.4 The local child support agency attends the court hearing on complaint disputes and provides any needed information or assistance to help the court issue a timely and accurate order.

Task:

1. Present the Case

Each local child support agency shall provide staff to plead the case in court hearings related to IV-D child support cases. The purpose of the hearing is to obtain a court order. The commissioner will officiate over the hearing and render a decision or court order based upon the facts of the hearing. The results of the hearing are updated in the system.

Note: If any party objects to the commissioner acting as a temporary Judge, the commissioner may hear the matter and make findings of fact and a recommended order. Within ten court days, a judge shall ratify the recommended order unless either party objects to the recommended order or the recommended order is in error. In both cases, the judge shall issue a temporary order and schedule a hearing *de novo* within ten court days. Any party may waive his/her right to the review hearing at any time.

Performance Measures:

- Number/percent of cases served versus orders established.
- Number/percent of cases with orders established versus needing orders.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency timely attends court hearings to present appropriate information.

Authority:

- MPP 12-106, 12-223.
- FC 17400.
- 45 CFR 303.31, 303.4.

CM.2.5 Obtain Stipulated Order

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency shall, when possible, appropriately obtain and process a stipulated order.

Standard:

CM.2.5 The local child support agency ensures that the stipulated order is appropriate, and follows proper procedures in obtaining the order.

Tasks:

1. Inform Non-Custodial Parent of Options

Each local child support agency shall appropriately inform the alleged father/non-custodial parent of his/her options in responding to a complaint. At any time during the process of preparing a stipulation, the alleged father/non-custodial parent may decide not to agree to terms. If this occurs the alleged father/ non-custodial parent is notified of his/her options.

2. Prepare Stipulation

Each local child support agency shall allow the alleged father/non-custodial parent, at any time during obtaining his/her order, to voluntarily agree to stipulate to an order. The case is reviewed to determine issues addressed in the complaint.

If new income information is received, the obligation must be recalculated to determine the correct child support amount. If the non-custodial parent agrees to the terms, an order is drafted (stipulation for judgment or supplemental judgment regarding parental obligations and judgment). The signature of the appropriate parties will be obtained prior to filing with the court. The stipulation is sent to the appropriate participants and/or other jurisdiction for signature prior to filing with the court. If any necessary parties fail to sign the stipulation, take the next appropriate action.

3. File Stipulation with Court

Each local child support agency shall timely forward the stipulation to the court for filing upon obtaining the appropriate signatures. When the filed stipulation is returned from the courts a conformed copy is served on the parties or other jurisdiction. Update the system with the court order information.

Performance Measures:

- Number/percent of cases with stipulations versus defaults and contested orders.
- Number/percent of cases of voluntary paternity establishments versus court orders.
- Number/percent of current support orders established by default versus stipulation.

Compliance Measures:

- Appropriate stipulations are obtained.

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Authority:

- MPP 12-106, 12-223.
- FC 3585, 3587, 4055, 4057, 4065, 17414.
- 45 CFR 303.4.

CM.2.6 Prepare Default Order

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely and appropriately acts to establish orders when the non-custodial or alleged father fails to respond. The failure of the non-custodial parent or alleged father to respond does not prevent an accurate order from being issued. Prior to pursuing issuance of a default order, each local child support agency shall take all necessary steps to ensure that it has the most accurate information available regarding the non-custodial parent or alleged father's circumstances.

Standard:

CM.2.6 The local child support agency acts in a timely manner to appropriately issue an accurate order when the non-custodial parent or alleged father fails to respond.

Tasks:

1. Review Case for New Information

Each local child support agency shall review the case to determine if any new information has been received. Generally, a case shall be reviewed thirty days or longer, depending on the type of service, following successful service of the summons and complaint with no response from the alleged father/non-custodial parent. The system is checked for new information from locate sources. If no new information is available, a final judgment can be obtained.

2. Prepare and File Final Judgment and Notice of Entry of Judgment

Each local child support agency shall generate and forward the Final Judgment and Notice of Entry of Judgment to court for the Judge/Commissioner's signature. This action shall occur if the alleged father/non-custodial parent has been properly served, a Proof of Service is filed with the court, and the alleged father/non-custodial parent has not filed an answer. The documents are filed and returned to the local child support agency. The system is updated and a filed copy is served on the appropriate parties.

3. Amend Proposed Judgment

Each local child support agency shall update the child support obligation and recalculate the past support amount if new income information for the alleged father/non-custodial parent is received. A proposed judgment will be prepared based on the new information. A declaration for amended proposed Judgment and the proposed judgment will be filed with the court and the proposed judgment and filed copies will be served on the alleged father/non-custodial parent via first class mail to the address of record. A proof of service by mail for the proposed judgment will be sent to the court. A new time frame for the alleged father/non-custodial parent to respond begins from the date of mailing of the proposed judgment: alleged father/non-custodial parent resides in California — 35 days; alleged father/non-custodial parent resides in the U.S. — 40 days; or alleged father/non-custodial parent resides outside the U.S. — 50 days. If the non-custodial parent fails to respond to the proposed judgment within the appropriate time frames listed above, a Final Judgment will be prepared and filed with the court.

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Note: The Final Judgment must be a mirror image (identical) of the Proposed or the latest proposed judgment on file with the court.

Performance Measures:

- Percent/number of current support orders established by default versus stipulation on hearing order.

Compliance Measures:

- The local child support agency must obtain orders or dispositions on cases where service of process has occurred as follows: 75 percent of cases within 6 months; and 90 percent of cases within 12 months.

Authority:

- MPP 12-109, 12-211.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400, 17430.
- CCP, 1013, 1011.
- 45 CFR 303.4, 303.101.

CM.2.7 Prepare for Dismissal

The intent of this functional element is to ensure each local child support agency takes action to dismiss summons and complaints as appropriate to the facts of the specific case. In addition, the local child support agency shall take all appropriate steps to determine whether a new summons and complaint or order should be pursued.

Standard:

CM.2.7 The local child support agency follows proper procedure when initiating a dismissal or responding to a request to dismiss a summons and complaint and must act quickly to determine whether it is appropriate to pursue the issuance of a new summons and complaint or proceed to secure order.

Tasks:

1. Review Reasons for Dismissal

Each local child support agency shall review the case to determine if an order already exists when a dismissal is being considered.

2. Vacate (Set Aside) Judgment

Each local child support agency shall vacate an order when there is a defective service of the pleading or motion on a party affected by the order, if there was fraud in the procurement of the order, or if there was some mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect on the part of the party. Setting aside an order or judgment only voids the current judgment or order, but the underlying complaint is still pending resolution. The order will need to be vacated (set aside) prior to dismissal. A Motion to Set Aside the Judgment is sent to court for a hearing. If the Motion is granted, an Order to Vacate is sent to the local child support agency from the court. A copy of the Order to Vacate is sent to the custodial parent, non-custodial parent/attorney, or other jurisdiction as appropriate.

3. Prepare and File Dismissal

Each local child support agency shall prepare and file a Dismissal with the courts if no order exists or a Motion to Vacate an Order is granted. The filed Dismissal is sent to the custodial parent, non-custodial parent/attorney, or other jurisdiction as appropriate. There are two types of Dismissals: without prejudice and with prejudice.

Performance Measures:

- Track and analyze number of dismissals.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency documents reasons for court Dismissal of a support petition.
- Local agency immediately seeks a support order in a court dismissal if it is determined that a future petition will be needed.

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Authority:

- MPP 12-106.3.
- FC 17432, 17433.
- 45 CFR 303.4(e).

CM.2.8 Validate Service

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency quickly identifies and corrects an invalid or improper service, and continues future attempt(s) to provide service with minimal interruption.

Standard:

CM.2.8 The local child support agency makes an accurate and timely determination regarding the validity of the service of documents and takes timely and appropriate corrective action when necessary.

Tasks:

1. Determine if Service was Invalid Versus Positive

Each local child support agency shall determine whether a summons and complaint was served appropriately when an invalid Proof of Service is received from the court, process server, or noted in the system from the reviewer. The local agency shall serve the summons and complaint again if it is determined to have been inappropriately served.

2. Corrections to Document

Each local child support agency shall ensure that corrections are made to the Proof of Service. Corrections may be required from the process server or the reviewer. If corrections are required to be completed, the form must be returned for correction. The reviewer may correct the form and resubmit the Proof of Service to the court for filing. An invalid service can occur if the wrong person was served, or the non-custodial parent was misidentified, or the Proof of Personal Service form was not correctly completed. The other jurisdiction and custodial parent must be notified of any service attempts and the results.

Performance Measures:

- Number or percentage of services that are invalid or improper service.

Compliance Measures:

- If a support order was required and the alleged father/non-custodial parent was located, the local child support agency must complete the service of process to establish the order or, document unsuccessful attempts, within 90 days.

Authority:

- MPP 12-106, 12-223.
- FC 17212, 17401, 17406.
- CCP, 415.10, 415.40.
- 45 CFR 303.3, 303.4.

CM.2.9 Review Genetic Appointment Results

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency shall take all steps to determine whether an alleged father is the father of the child(ren) named in the summons and complaint. Further, the local agency shall take all appropriate steps to dismiss the action against the individual ruled out as the father by test results. The local agency also shall identify the next possible alleged father and begin appropriate action. If the alleged father is identified as the father, the local child support agency shall pursue establishment of an order.

Standard:

CM.2.9 The local child support agency takes all steps to ensure accuracy in determining whether an alleged father is the father.

Tasks:

1. Conduct Genetic Testing

Each local child support agency shall schedule, either by stipulation or court order, all members of the case for genetic testing as appropriate based on the facts of the particular case.

2. Determine Next Action

Each local child support agency shall make a determination of the actions to be taken based on completion of the testing procedures, and laboratory notification of the DNA testing results. The local agency shall initiate review for failure to comply if either party fails to appear for genetic testing in an aided case. A motion to compel the custodial parent to submit to genetic testing is then generated, filed with the courts, and served on the custodial parent. If the alleged father fails to appear for genetic testing, proceed with the establishment of an order.

3. Capture Results

Each local child support agency shall assess the laboratory results after all members have been tested. The system is updated with the test results and all members are notified. If there are positive results the alleged father is notified with letter, copies of results, income and expense declaration form. Allow 10-day time frame for the alleged father to respond by filing an answer or to sign a Stipulation to establish an order. If an answer has been filed and a court date set, prepare for court hearing. If there are negative results, schedule an appointment with the custodial parent to identify the photograph taken of alleged father at the time of genetic testing. If custodial parent positively identifies the alleged father, dismiss action against the individual.

4. If Alleged Father Excluded, Validate Identity of Person Tested

Each local child support agency shall verify the identity of the person that appeared for genetic testing as the possible alleged father by showing the custodial parent a photograph. If the custodial parent indicates the person tested was not a possible alleged father, research the case to determine the next appropriate action. If the

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custodial parent indicates the person tested is not the alleged father, review for possible criminal referral and submission to the district attorney. If the custodial parent positively identifies the alleged father's photograph, dismiss the action and reinterview custodial parent to determine the next possible alleged father. If the custodial parent fails to respond and is receiving welfare benefits, send a Non-Cooperation Notice to the welfare department. If the case is non-welfare and the custodial parent fails to respond, prepare for case closure.

Performance Measures:

- Number/percent of genetic tests completed (out of total needing tests).
- Number/percent of exclusions by genetic testing.
- Number/percent of positive genetic tests.

Compliance Measures:

- The local child support agency must obtain orders or dispositions on cases where service of process has occurred as follows: 75 percent of cases within 6 months; and 90percent of cases within 12 months.

Authority:

- MPP 12-106, 12-223.
- FC 7540, 7541, 7610-7614.
- 45 CFR 303.5.

CM.2.10 Register Order

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency takes appropriate action to register existing orders within the appropriate jurisdiction, regardless of the jurisdiction in which the order was issued. Further, the local agency shall provide the non-custodial parent with an opportunity to challenge the registration of the order.

Standard:

CM.2.10 The local child support agency takes all appropriate and timely actions to register an order that was originally issued in another jurisdiction, and works affirmatively with the non-custodial parent if the registration is being challenged.

Tasks:

1. Obtain Certified Copies of Order

Each local child support agency shall obtain an existing order filed in another county or State. When the local agency has knowledge of an existing order it shall seek a certified or conformed copy of the order. The local child support agency will send a request and obtain endorsed file copy or conformed copies of the order from court of the other jurisdiction.

2. Generate Court Documents

Each local child support agency shall register the order upon receipt of certified copies of the order. There are two types of registrations: a California order and a non-California order.

California Order: Intrastate

- Prepare the Statement of Registration of California Support Order: (a) if it is welfare or Uniform Interstate Family Support Act case, the local child support agency can sign the document, or (b) if it is non-welfare.
- Prepare a Notice Regarding Payment of Support.
- Send to court for Superior Court number and filing of documents.
- Serve the non-custodial parent, custodial parent and other jurisdiction as appropriate.

Non-California Order: Interstate

- Prepare the Notice of Registration of Out-of-State Support Order.
- Prepare the Registration Statement: All signatures must be notarized.

- Prepare the Notice Regarding Payment of Support.
- Send to court for Superior Court number and filing of documents.
- Serve the non-custodial parent, custodial parent and other jurisdiction as appropriate.

3. Motion to Vacate the Registration

Each local child support agency shall take action based on the response of the non-custodial parent. The non-custodial parent has 20 days from the date of mailing of the Statement of Registration to petition the court to cancel (vacate) the registration. If the non-custodial parent is seeking to cancel the registration, the non-custodial parent will serve the local child support agency with a Notice of Motion to Vacate.

Performance Measures:

- Number/percent of current support orders that require registration.

Compliance Measures:

- Generate process documents to be served on each parent subject to a child support order, within 30 calendar days of the commencement of a review of the court order.

Authority:

- FC 5600, 5601, 5602, 5603.

CM.2.11 Notification of Right to Review and Adjustment

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency actively seeks to maintain orders that are appropriate to the current circumstances of the parents. The local agency shall make parents aware, at least once every year, that they have the right to request a review of the order.

Standard:

CM.2.11 The local child support agency notifies parents at least annually that they have the right to request a review.

Tasks:

1. Generate Review and Adjustment Notification

Each local child support agency shall, at least once every year, send a notice to each parent informing them of their right to request a review. The notice must include instructions of how to submit a request for the review and the criteria the local child support agency will use in considering any request. The system is updated with the date the notice is sent to each parent.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely conducts annual case review and adjustment.

Compliance Measures:

- Notice of right to request a review sent to all custodial parties and non-custodial parents annually.

Authority:

- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400.

- 45 CFR 303.8.

CM.2.12 Receive Request for Review and Adjustment

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a process, if requested by either the custodial party or the non-custodial parent, to timely review orders for modification and initiate court action, as appropriate.

Standard:

CM.2.12 The local child support agency reviews all requests for modification in a timely manner and seeks a modification if sufficient change of circumstances is likely.

Tasks:

1. Parent Requests a Modification

Each local child support agency shall timely respond to a request for modification from either a custodial party or a non-custodial parent, whether orally or in writing, by sending or handing the requesting party an Income and Expense Declaration. The local agency shall also send one to the other party.

2. Review Case for Modification

Each local child support agency shall, upon receipt of a completed Income and Expense Declaration from either party, timely review the file to determine if a child support order may increase or decrease by a least \$50 or 20 percent, whichever is less, or if medical support has not been ordered in the case.

3. File Notice of Motion or Order to Show Cause to Obtain Modification

Each local child support agency shall timely file a Notice of Motion regarding modification or Order to Show Cause if the order will change by the amount specified above or the order does not include an order for medical support. A court date will be obtained and parties will be served.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely reviews and modifies orders.

Compliance Measures:

- All cases in which a request for review has been received must be screened within 15 calendar days of receipt of the request to determine which cases are subject to the review criteria.
- Both parties must be sent a notice at least 30 calendar days before the commencement of a review informing them that a review will be conducted.
- Local agencies must wait 30 days before conducting the review unless both parties jointly agree to waive this requirement.

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- Once the review has been completed, both parties must receive notice of any proposed adjustment to the order, or of a determination that there should be no change to the order.

- The review and adjustment process must be completed within 180 days.

Authority:

- FSD Letters 93-22, 94-02.

- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400.

- 45 CFR 303.8.

CM.2.13 Initiate Review and Adjustment

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a process by which it reviews orders for modification and initiates court action, as appropriate, if certain conditions are met.

Standard:

CM.2.13 The local child support agency timely initiates review of a case for modification and seeks a modification, if appropriate, if it becomes aware of specific changes of circumstance of the family.

Task:

1. Information Received Showing Need for Modification

Each local child support agency shall consider information of which it becomes aware that indicates special circumstances warranting review of a case for possible modification. These circumstances include, but may not be limited to: the non-custodial parent being incarcerated; the non-custodial parent receiving needs-based income, including SSI, TANF and General Assistance; the non-custodial parent being disabled; or having income information when the original order was established using presumed income and has not been modified.

2. Review Case for Modification

Each local child support agency shall, upon becoming aware that a specific circumstance exists that may warrant a modification of the child support order, timely review the file to determine if the order may be increased or decreased by at least \$50 or 20 percent, whichever is less.

3. Seek Set Aside

Each local child support agency shall, if the case involves presumed income and is appropriate for a set aside, seek to set aside and re-establish the order based on actual income.

4. File Notice of Motion or Order to Show Cause to Obtain Modification

Each local child support agency shall, if the order will change by the amount specified above, timely file a Notice of Motion regarding modification or Order to Show Cause. A court date will be obtained and parties will be served.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely reviews and modifies orders.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- FSD Letters 93-22, 94-02.

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- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400.
- 45 CFR 303.8.

**BEST PRACTICES
CASE MANAGEMENT
CM.2 ESTABLISHMENT AND MODIFICATION**

CM.2.1 Generate Summons and Complaint and Proposed Judgment and/or Petition

- Ability to maintain data and status on IV-D cases where paternity establishment is handled outside of the IV-D agency. For example, the interface with the Paternity Opportunity Program and Department of Health Services Office of Vital Statistics.
- Send notice to alleged father/non-custodial parent that service of process is pending inviting his involvement by coming into the office.
- Filing of summons and complaint with the court is done after a verified locate of alleged father/non-custodial parent for service of process.

CM.2.2 Conduct Service of Process

- Personal service is the preferred method of service and is used if at all possible.
- Reflect non-custodial parent preference for location of service of process—not use standard priority method.
- The local child support agency should pursue a stipulation as early in the process as possible, and continue to do so up until the point that the summons and complaint is provided.

CM.2.3 Receive Answer or Other Response

- Access to genetic testing lab calendars to schedule appointment.
- Use of bucal test seems to be more efficient and less invasive.
- On-site collection of genetic test samples.

CM.2.4 Attend Court Hearing

- Attempt to resolve disputed cases prior to going to hearing. If unable to resolve disputes, identify issues in dispute prior to the hearing.

CM.2.5 Obtain Stipulated Order

- A stipulated order is the preferred method of establishing an order.
- If warranted, stipulate for set-aside of court order.

CM.2.6 Prepare Default Order

- Provide pre-default notice to non-custodial parent.
- Conduct pre-default hearing.

CM.2.7 Prepare for Dismissal

- The local child support agency determines if it would be appropriate to reseek an order if the court/administrative authority dismisses a support order petition without prejudice.
- The local child support agency ensures that the obligor and obligee are aware of the 90 day time period from the first collection of money in which to set aside the current order when actual income changes the current order by more than 20 percent.

CM.2.8 Validate Service

CM.2.9 Review Genetic Appointment Results

CM.2.10 Register Order

- If another California local child support agency has been involved in the case, notify that local child support agency when the registration is completed.

CM.2.11 Notification of Right to Review and Adjustment

- Monitor and identify cases for review and modification pursuant to the procedures and timeframes established by the Department of Child Support Services.
- Identify cases in which the order does not include health care coverage.
- Determine if a review is appropriate based on the age of the order or other criteria selected by the Department of Child Support Services.

CM.2.12 Receive Request for Review and Adjustment

CM.2.13 Initiate Review and Adjustment

CM.3 Enforcement

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies believe that enforcement remedies should be appropriately applied based on the characteristics of the case. All child support cases are not the same. The goal is to use informed decision-making in applying the most appropriate enforcement remedies that will result in the intended outcome, i.e., satisfaction of his/her child support obligation. A support obligation may include both child support payments and health insurance coverage.

In addition, the DCSS and local agencies believe that enforcement techniques should be applied uniformly and consistently statewide. Once a support order is established, if necessary, there are various enforcement remedies that can be used including wage assignments, writs of executions, license restrictions, liens, intercepts and others. The goal is to ensure that statewide criteria and methods are used in the application of these various remedies. Child support program customers should receive appropriate, consistent, and highest quality services regardless of the geographic area in which they reside.

CM.3.1 Perform Intercept Activities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency uses intercept methods and tools, as appropriate, to ensure that an obligor satisfies his or her child support obligation.

Standard:

CM.3.1 The local child support agency uniformly and consistently uses intercepts by applying specified case criteria, meeting time lines, noticing requirements, and ensuring that in an interstate case, the other jurisdiction is notified of all modifications and updates.

Tasks:

1. Send Intercept Pre-Offset Notice

Each local child support agency shall send an advance notice to inform the non-custodial parent that his/her arrearage may be referred to a variety of intercept agencies for the collection of support. These agencies include, but are not limited to, the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Internal Revenue Service tax intercept, federal administrative offset and passport denial). Note: Passport Denial is not an intercept; however, it is included here because it is sent on the same file. Employment Development Department (Unemployment and State Disability Insurance), Franchise Tax Board (state lottery and state tax intercept), Board of Equalization (sales tax intercept), and Public Employees Retirement System (retirement benefits).

2. Evaluate Response to Intercept Notice

Each local child support agency shall evaluate case and arrearage information provided by a non-custodial parents to determine if it is appropriate to continue with the intercept. The non-custodial parent is notified of the decision. If the non-custodial parent does not respond to the notice, the intercept submissions are initiated.

3. Submit and Review Intercept Information

Each local child support agency shall submit arrearage cases for intercept when the appropriate referral criteria are met. Updates are submitted on specific intercepts as appropriate. In response to the original intercept request, each intercepting agency provides a variety of information regarding the non-custodial parent. This information may include intercept information, as well as rejects on previously submitted transactions. Rejected transactions are reviewed, corrected, and resubmitted.

4. Conduct Intercept Administrative Review/Appeal

Each local child support agency shall timely respond to appeals of the intercept action taken from non-custodial parents. The information he/she provides is evaluated to determine whether it is appropriate to modify or suppress enforcement action. For federal administrative offsets, and state and federal tax intercepts, the non-custodial parent may request an administrative review. He/she must submit this request in writing

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to the county with justification. Upon reviewing the information, the county will notify the appropriate agency if a modification is necessary.

Performance Measures:

- Amount and percent of total dollars collected through intercepts.
- Number of complaints and state hearing held and outcomes.

Compliance Measures:

- All eligible cases must be submitted for Internal Revenue Service/Franchise Tax Board intercept
- All eligible cases must be submitted for unemployment insurance benefits/state disability insurance withholding.
- Cases applicable at the end of the review period must be referred to Franchise Tax Board under the 90-day delinquent requirement.
- Cases delinquent at intake must be referred to Franchise Tax Board within 90-calendar days of case opening.

Authority:

- MPP 12-700.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400.
- 45 CFR 303.72, 303.102.

CM.3.2 Perform Data Match Activities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency encourages the participation of the parent owing support in meeting his/her child support obligation. Each local child support agency has in place a method to notify an obligor of an impending data match for the purpose of identifying the obligor's assets.

Standard:

CM.3.2 The local child support agency timely notifies the non-custodial parent of impending data match activities and allows the non-custodial parent the opportunity to respond prior to initiating data match activities.

Tasks:

1. Send Data Match Notice

Each local child support agency shall send an advance notice to inform the non-custodial parent that they may be submitted to a variety of data match sources in an attempt to identify asset and locate information. These sources include the State Licensing Match System and multiple Credit Reporting Agencies.

2. Evaluate Response to Data Match Notice

Each local child support agency shall determine whether it is appropriate to continue with data matches if the non-custodial parent responds to the notice. The non-custodial parent is notified of the decision. If the non-custodial parent does not respond to the notice, the data match submissions are initiated. Because the purpose of the Credit Reporting Agencies' data match is to update potential creditors with the status of the non-custodial parent's outstanding support obligation, the information is released to this agency regardless of a response to the notice.

3. Submit and Review Data Match Information

Each local child support agency shall submit the names of non-custodial parents for a data match when the appropriate agencies' referral criteria are met. Any revisions to previously submitted information are included with the new submissions sent to the agencies. Updates are routinely provided. In response to the original submittal, each Data Match agency provides a variety of information regarding the non-custodial parent. This information may include new and/or revised demographic and asset information on the non-custodial parent, as well as rejects on previously submitted transactions.

4. Review Consumer Dispute

Each local child support agency shall conduct a review of information provided by the non-custodial parent to determine if any corrections to credit report are necessary. If the non-custodial parent disputes the accuracy of the information depicted on his/her credit report, a review is conducted to evaluate the information provided by the non-custodial parent and determine if any corrections are necessary. The results of the review are provided to the Credit Reporting Agencies.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency performs appropriate data match activities.

Compliance Measures:

- Appropriate action is taken within 30 days of location of assets.

- In Interstate cases, the other jurisdiction must be notified of updates or changes within ten days.

Authority:

- FC 17520.

- 42 USC 666.

CM.3.3 Perform Lien Activities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency performs lien activities as a means of maximizing the potential for the obligor to meet his or her child support obligation.

Standard:

CM.3.3 The local child support agency has in place processes to ensure that a lien is filed whenever a new order is established, a new asset is located, a case is opened for enforcement and there is an existing order, an existing order is registered for enforcement, or when it has become known that an obligor has become a party to a pending action/special proceeding (lawsuit), as well as the processes for timely and accurate serving, recording and releasing of liens. In interstate cases, information will be provided to the other jurisdiction on all modifications and updates.

Tasks:

1. Take Action on Liens

Each local child support agency shall appropriately file liens. Not all liens require the filing of documents with the court once a money judgment or order has been issued. Although a lien in pending action/special proceeding does require filing lien documents with the court, a real property lien, a personal property lien, and a worker's compensation award lien does not require the filing of lien documents with the court.

2. Serve Lien Notice

Each local child support agency shall appropriately serve lien notices. To whom the notice of lien documents must be served is dependent upon the type of lien obtained. Service may be required on the obligor, custodial party, all parties to an action, an obligor's estate and dependents, the Department of Industrial Relations' Worker's Compensation Appeals Board, or other entity. Service is done personally or by mail. In addition, notice of lien documents filed with the court, as in the case of a lien in pending action/special proceeding, must exhibit the date that filing was made with the court.

3. Record/File Lien

Liens may be recorded in multiple counties. Real property liens are recorded with the County Recorder's Offices; personal property liens are recorded with the Secretary of State; lien in pending action/special proceeding are filed with the court; and worker's compensation award liens are filed with the Department of Industrial Relations' Worker's Compensation Appeals Board. The following documents are used to record/file a lien:

- Real Property Lien: An Abstract of Judgment, a certified copy of the order or money judgment, or a federal notice of lien is used to record a real property lien.
- Personal Property Lien: A Notice of Judgment Lien is used to record a personal property lien.

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- **Lien In Pending Action/Special Proceeding:** A Notice of Lien with either an abstract of support judgment or a certified copy of the money judgment or order is used to file a lien in pending action/special proceeding.
- **Worker's Compensation Award Lien:** A Notice and Request for Allowance of Lien and any other document required by the Department of Industrial Relations' Worker's Compensation Appeals Board is used to file a worker's compensation award lien.

Interstate liens are recorded in the other state's Recorder's Office (Other Entity). On an intrastate case, the other county is updated with this information.

4. Receive Lien Information

The following lien information may be received and updated to the system: book and page information (County Recorder's Office, Other Entity), recording information (Secretary of State), and hearing information (Worker's Compensation and Courts). The "Other Entity" referred to in this process is the other state's Recorder's Office. On an interstate case, the other county is updated with this information.

5. Release Lien

For real property liens, an Acknowledgment of Satisfaction of Judgment provides for full satisfactions, partial satisfactions and matured installments. Real property liens are released through the County Recorder's Office. The release can be filed with the county recorder's office by the local child support agency, the obligor, or a title company (Other Entity). Personal property liens are released through the Secretary of State. Worker's Compensation liens are released through the Department of Industrial Relations. Probate liens and a lien in pending action/special proceeding are released through the court. On an intrastate case, the other county is updated with this information.

Performance Measures:

- Amount and percent of total dollars collected through liens.

Compliance Measures:

- Real (or personal) property liens must be recorded for applicable cases.

Authority:

- MPP 12-600.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400, 17500, 17523.
- CCP 597.510, 697.060, 697.320, 697.510, 697.520, 697.530, 697.560, 697.640, 708.410, 708.420, 708.430, 708.470, 724.010, 724.030, 724.040 and 724.060.
- 45 CFR 302.70.
- 42, USC 666(a)(4).

CM.3.4 Request Interstate Service

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency initiates interstate service as an enforcement tool when local enforcement remedies have failed.

Standard:

CM.3.4 The local child support agency routinely assesses its cases to identify interstate initiating cases and has processes in place to ensure that timely requests for interstate services are made when other methods of enforcement have failed.

Tasks:

1. Request Uniform Interstate Family Support Act Services

Once it has been determined that Long Arm and Direct Wage are not feasible, a two-state action must be initiated. The custodial parent must be sent appropriate Uniform Interstate Family Support Act documents. Upon return of those documents, a two-state action to the other jurisdiction must be completed requesting services for establishment or enforcement of an order.

2. Request U.S. Attorney Intervention

When a non-custodial parent willfully fails to pay his/her past due support obligation by moving across state lines, a request for services may be made to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Willfulness can be presumed where arrears exceed 5000 dollars, or have been due over one year. This type of request is usually made after all other enforcement efforts, including Uniform Interstate Family Support Act services, have failed. Notices are sent to all applicable parties. All submittal information and actions are recorded, tracked and maintained.

3. Apply for U.S. District Court Assistance

When a responding state or other Jurisdiction requests enforcement of a support obligation, despite numerous written requests by the initiating state, a request for services may be made to the Office of Child Support Enforcement. This procedure is typically used only when normal efforts to secure compliance from the responding state have failed. All required documentation for this process is sent to all applicable parties.

Performance Measures:

- Number and percent of non-custodial parents with out-of-state collections.
- Number and percent of non-custodial parents without out-of-state collections.
- Number and percent of non-custodial parents with out-of-state Uniform Interstate Family Support Act actions in place.
- Number and percent of non-custodial parents with collections via direct wage withholding.

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Compliance Measures:

- Within ten working days the local child support agency must forward new information received to the responding state.
- Within ten working days the local child support agency must transfer a case to another California county when the non-custodial parent moves.
- Within ten working days of locating the non-custodial parent in a different jurisdiction within the State, the IV-D agency must forward appropriate documentation to the appropriate jurisdiction and notify the initiating state and Central Registry of its action.
- Within ten working days the local child support agency must send the new address to the initiating state and Central Registry when the non-custodial parent is located in another state.
- Within ten working days of locating the non-custodial parent in a different state, the IV-D agency must return the documentation, including the new location, to the initiating state, or if directed by the initiating state, forward the documentation to the central registry in the state where the non-custodial parent has been located; and notify the State Central Registry where the case has been sent.
- Within 30 working days the local child support agency must respond to inquiries from the responding state.

Authority:

- CCR 117000.
- FC 4905, 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400.
- 45 CFR 303.7.

CM.3.5 Perform Medical Support Activities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency performs activities necessary to enforce the medical support provisions in the court order.

Standard:

CM.3.5 The local child support agency performs activities necessary to ensure that parents obtain health insurance coverage for dependents in a child support case. When health insurance coverage is not available there is a process in place to monitor and periodically reissue an insurance availability letter to parents.

Tasks:

1. Determine Applicability of Medical Support Activities

The applicability of medical support activity is determined. Medical support activities apply only in cases with current support obligations.

2. Send Insurance Availability Letter

Upon establishment of a support order with health insurance provisions, the non-custodial parent and non-custodial parent's employer are issued a notice requesting health insurance information. "Employer" also includes Military Installations and Union Offices. Employers and insurers are required to enroll a child under the health coverage available.

3. Evaluate Health Insurance Response

The non-custodial parent and/or employer's response to the notice is evaluated to determine whether or not health coverage is available. If insurance is available, at a reasonable cost, the necessary steps are taken to secure health insurance coverage for the dependent children. If it is not available, the case is documented and monitored by periodically reissuing the insurance availability letter. In an Interstate case, the other jurisdiction is also notified.

4. Send National Medical Support Notice Documents

If health insurance is available from the non-custodial parent's employer, the National Medical Support Notice documents are sent to the employer. For military personnel, it may be necessary for the custodial party to pursue other alternatives. National Medical Support Notices may also be sent to other entities (which may include retirement plans and insurance companies).

5. Send Health Insurance Information

Once health insurance coverage is obtained, the custodial party is provided with the appropriate insurance documentation including medical insurance cards. Any health insurance information obtained from either the non-custodial parent or the employer is provided to the Department of Health Services on a 6110 if the custodial parent is on

aid. If coverage is obtained on an interstate case, the other jurisdiction is updated with this information.

6. Pursue Non-Compliance with Health Insurance Order

The system monitors the member, other entities and/or employer's compliance to health insurance provisions. A noncompliance notice is issued to any party (member, employer, or other entity) who fails to comply with such orders. "Other Entity" may include retirement plans and insurance companies.

7. Receive/Notify of Health Insurance Lapse

A lapse in health insurance may occur if the member terminates employment, and/or health insurance coverage is no longer available. In these instances, the member, employer, other entity or Department of Health Services may provide information explaining the lapse in coverage. "Other Entity" may include retirement plans and insurance companies. This information is updated to the system and provided to the Department of Health Services. In the event the notification of the lapse in insurance is received from a source other than the custodial party, he/she will receive an update as well.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- The local child support agency must seek an adjustment of the order to include a medical support provision in those cases where there was a functioning wage assignment during the review period and there was no provision in the existing order for medical support.
- To pursue health insurance coverage required by the support order, or in situations where coverage was provided but the obligor changed employment, the local child support agency must determine whether health insurance coverage is available; enforce the medical support provision in the order through a National Medical Support Notice, and forward the health insurance coverage information, if any, to the custodial parent.
- Department of Health Services must be informed of any lapse or change in the health insurance coverage if the custodial parent receives aid.
- The local child support agency shall continue to monitor cases for private health insurance coverage, if the obligor does not have health insurance coverage available at the time the medical support order was issued.

Authority:

- CCR 112152.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17415, 3585, 3751, 4006, 4057, 17422.
- WIC 14008.6.

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- 45 CFR 302.33 – 303.30, 303.31.

CM.3.6 Perform Security Deposit Activities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency performs activities aimed at securing future child support payments from non-custodial parents that are in arrears and have the financial ability to pay. This activity would be used when other routine enforcement activities have been unsuccessful or are not appropriate. An update must be provided to the other jurisdiction on all interstate cases on activities related to initiating a security deposit as the method of payment.

Standard:

CM.3.6 The local child support agency timely seeks to establish a security deposit to secure payment of future support from a non-custodial parent with ability to pay but no other method for the agency to secure payment.

Tasks:

1. Notify of Security Deposit

Security deposits and other guarantees are used to require a non-custodial parent to secure future support payments. Typically, the non-custodial parent is at least 60 days in arrears, does not have wage withholding, and is known to have the financial ability to secure a security deposit. The non-custodial parent must be notified of his/her delinquency and advised that a security deposit may be necessary if the delinquency is not satisfied.

2. Evaluate Security Deposit Response

If the non-custodial parent responds to the delinquency notice, the information he/she provides is evaluated to determine whether or not it is necessary to continue with the security deposit action. If the non-custodial parent does not respond to the delinquency notice and/or satisfy his/her delinquency, court action is initiated to request a security deposit.

3. Initiate Security Deposit Court Action

To obtain an order from the court requesting a security deposit from an obligor, an Order to Show Cause, a Notice of Motion, an Application for Order for Child Support Security Deposit and Evidence of Deposit, and a declaration signed under the penalty of perjury that the support obligation is at least 60 days delinquent are the types of documents that must be filed with the court. The documents to be filed with the court are dependent upon the type of security deposit being requested. The amount of the security deposit requested is usually equal to one year's support payments or 6,000 dollars, whichever is less. The court may issue ex parte orders to prevent the non-custodial parent from transferring, encumbering, or in any way disposing of any property.

4. Serve Security Deposit Documents

The non-custodial parent must be served the notice of hearing and copies of the court documents by personal service or return receipt mail. A copy of the order will be served

upon the financial institution or other entity instructed to hold the security deposit funds. Proof of Service documentation will be retained as part of the case record.

5. Update Security Deposit Hearing Information

The court must make a determination that a wage assignment would not be applicable or effective before granting the request for a security deposit.

6. Secure a Security Deposit

If the court orders the security deposit, the non-custodial parent is required to provide funds for deposit in a trust account designated by the court. If the non-custodial parent does not have the necessary amount of funds available, he/she may be ordered to obtain a security deposit from a surety company or other asset holder.

7. Send Security Deposit Offset Notification

If the non-custodial parent fails to satisfy the default in payments, he/she will be notified by personal service or return receipt mail that the deposited assets, being held by the other entity, will be used to pay the arrearage and the amount of support currently due if a payment is not received.

8. Send Security Deposit Restore Notification

If funds from a non-custodial parent's security deposit account are used to satisfy a delinquency, notification is sent to him/her advising that the funds must be restored. This occurs when the court order for the security deposit specifies a certain amount be continuously maintained in the account.

9. Return Security Deposit

A non-custodial parent's security deposit may be returned under certain circumstances.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- FC 4012, 4550, 4560, 4561, 4563, 4570, 4600-4617, 4630, 4640.
- 45 CFR 303.104.

CM.3.7 Pursue Court Action Activities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency meets the criteria for pursuing court action to enforce a child support order.

Standard:

CM.3.7 The local child support agency proactively initiates court action to enforce the child support order when other enforcement techniques fail.

Tasks:

1. Initiate Court Action

In certain situations, a court action is required to enforce the support order. These court actions include:

- (a) Seek work orders - may be pursued when a non-custodial parent's child support delinquency is the direct result of his/her unemployment.
- (b) Order of examination – may be pursued in situations where other routine discovery techniques have proved unsuccessful in locating assets belonging to the non-custodial parent.
- (c) Writ of execution – may be used to seize real or personal property belonging to the non-custodial parent in an effort to satisfy a support arrearage.
- (d) Civil and criminal contempt and PC270 – may be pursued when a non-custodial parent fails to comply with an order.

Note:

If notification of a non-custodial parent's bankruptcy is received, a lien is filed and the enforcement action is stayed.

To initiate a court action, the appropriate documentation must be filed with the court. This documentation may include an Order to Show Cause, a Notice of Motion, or an Order to Appear. If any of these court actions are taken on an interstate case, the other jurisdiction is provided with an update.

2. Receive Filed Documents and Serve

Once the filed documents are received from the court, the non-custodial parent must be served with a copy of the documents by personal service or return receipt mail. In the case of a Writ of Execution the appropriate financial institution is served by the levying officer (other entity). Service of the Order for Examination on the non-custodial parent creates a lien on the non-custodial parent's personal property for a period of one year from the date of the order.

3. Evaluate Response to Court Documents

The non-custodial parent's response, if any, is evaluated to determine whether court action is necessary to obtain the sought after result. If the non-custodial parent does not respond to the notice and/or satisfy his/her delinquency, the next step in the court action process is taken.

4. Attend Court Hearing

Refer to CM.2.4 for requirement for local child support agency to attend court hearing.

5. Update Court Hearing Information

At the hearing, or following thereafter, the court must make a determination regarding the requested court action and provide the non-custodial parent with the terms of the order, if any.

6. Update Financial Institution Writ History

If a Writ of Execution is served on a financial institution, the financial institution will respond with a Memorandum of Garnishee. This response provides information concerning the status of the non-custodial parent's assets held by the financial institution.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- In interstate cases the other jurisdiction must be notified of all actions.

Authority:

- MPP 12-107, 12-224.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400.
- CCP 1209, 1209.75.
- EC 452.
- PC 166(a)(4), 270, 271(a).

CM.3.8 Submit for Internal Revenue Service Full Collection

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency submits appropriate cases for Internal Revenue Service Full Collection when all other techniques and remedies have been unsuccessful.

Standard:

CM.3.8 The local child support agency has a process in place for ensuring that all cases submitted for Internal Revenue Service Full Collection to the Office of Child Support Enforcement meet specific case eligibility requirements and adhere to all other conditions related to a request for such services.

Task:

1. Submit for Internal Revenue Service Full Collection

When normal support collection techniques and remedies have been unsuccessful, a request for Internal Revenue Service Full Collection services may be made to the Office of Child Support Enforcement. This request for services can be made when the following eligibility requirements are met:

- (a) There must be an order for support,
- (b) The arrearage must be at least 750.00 dollars,
- (c) Reasonable efforts to collect the arrearage must have been made using the State's own collection mechanisms,
- (d) The case cannot be referred more frequently than every six months.

There is a fee for this service, regardless of whether or not the collection effort is successful. Once a request for services is made, the case must be removed from Internal Revenue Service/Franchise Tax Board intercepts. When the request for services is no longer required, a request for cancellation is sent to Office of Child Support Enforcement. Updates are provided to all involved parties on cases referred to Office of Child Support Enforcement.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- MPP 12-700.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17400.
- 45 CFR 303.72, 303.102.

CM.3.9 Perform Order/Notice to Withhold Income Activities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency issues a Order/Notice to Withhold Income for all IV-D cases with a child support order.

Standard:

CM.3.9 The local child support agency has established and maintains a process to ensure that tasks related to performing wage assignment activities are done timely and accurately and updated information is provided to other involved entities and systems.

Tasks:

1. Issue Order/Notice to Withhold Income

An Order/Notice to Withhold Income must be issued to all known employers on IV-D cases with a support order. "Employer" also includes Military Installations and Union Offices. Both documents withhold a portion of a non-custodial parent's earnings to ensure payment of current support, and arrearages if applicable. Wages from retirement plans (other entity), Worker's Compensation benefits, and Social Security benefits can also be attached. Information shall be entered into the automated system regarding all wage assignment activity. Title II benefits (SSD, SSDI) may be attached; Title XVI benefits (SSI/SSP) are not attachable.

2. Pursue Non-Compliance with Wage Assignment or Notice to Withhold

If neither payment nor notification of termination is received once the wage assignment is issued, a notice of noncompliance is sent to the employer, other entity, or Department of Industrial Relations. Failure to comply with the order makes the employer or other entity subject to contempt action.

3. Update Wage Assignment or Notice to Withhold Information

If a non-custodial parent's employment and/or benefits terminate, the employer, other entity and/or Department of Industrial Relations is required to provide notification of termination. Such information is entered into the automated system.

4. Adjust Wage Assignment or Notice to Withhold

If a non-custodial parent contests the wage assignment, or Notice to Withhold his/her case is reviewed for possible wage assignment or Notice to Withhold adjustment. If the review results in a adjustment to the wage assignment, or Notice to Withhold, all involved parties are notified. On orders established on or before 7/1/90, the request for adjustment must be made to the court. All information pertaining to the adjustment is updated in the system. The non-custodial parent may only contest and request a hearing regarding the Order/Notice to Withhold Income to contest the amount of arrears. In order to review and adjust current support, the non-custodial parent or local child support agency must file a separate motion. If either the Order/Notice to Withhold Income or the court order is modified, a revised Order/Notice to Withhold Income will be served on the employer.

Performance Measures

- Amount and percent of total dollars collected through wage assignment.
- Number and percent of cases with wage assignments.

Compliance Measures:

- In a case where the employer is known, the local child support agency must send a wage assignment that includes both current support and arrears, if applicable, to the obligor's employer.
- If wage assignment is used as an enforcement action, it must be served within 15 calendar days of the date an employer is known.
- If an employer is discovered through a new employee register, a wage assignment must be issued within two working days of the employer being entered into the new employee register.
- In interstate cases the other jurisdiction must be notified of the status of the wage assignment activities.

Authority:

- MPP 12-107, 12-224.
- FC 5200-5261, 17420.
- CFR 45 303.100.
- 42 USC 653a.

CM.3.10 Bankruptcy

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a process to respond to notices that a non-custodial parent has sought protection from collection actions in a bankruptcy court. In addition, the local agency identifies useful information from bankruptcy case documents that can be used to collect support, or establish or modify a current support order.

Standard:

CM.3.10 The local child support agency responds promptly to notices of bankruptcy and stops enforcement actions, if required.

Persons who are unable to pay their debts may seek to discharge their debts by filing a petition in a bankruptcy court. The person filing the petition is known as a debtor. The persons to whom the debts are owed to are known as creditors. Property and assets listed in the bankruptcy case are referred to as the estate of the debtor. Once the petition is filed, collection of debts is automatically stayed. What this means is all actions by creditors to collect debts owed by the debtor must be stopped. The automatic stay applies to anyone who has knowledge the bankruptcy case has been filed. Exceptions to the automatic stay apply with respect to the establishment of paternity, establishment or modification of support, enforcement of support against non-estate property, and the prosecution of crimes (including criminal nonsupport and contempt).

Although child support debt cannot be discharged, it is usually listed on the debtor's schedule of debts. When the local child support agency receives a notice of the bankruptcy case, a prompt review by legal staff is required.

Tasks:

1. Update Bankruptcy Information

Enter information about the bankruptcy case into the system: chapter (see next task), date filed, bankruptcy court district, case number, trustee, and attorney for non-custodial parent for bankruptcy case.

2. Determine Type of Bankruptcy

Bankruptcies are filed under Title 11 of the United States Code, which is divided into chapters under which a debtor may select to discharge debts. The chapters local child support agencies may encounter are Chapters 7, 11, 12 & 13. The chapter used will be stated on the bankruptcy petition.

3. Obtain Information

Under any bankruptcy chapter, the local child support agency staff should request from the debtor's attorney or the debtor, a copy of all bankruptcy schedules and, if appropriate, a copy of the proposed bankruptcy plan. These documents will specify the assets of the debtor, which are referred to as the debtor's bankruptcy estate.

4. Take Action Based on Type of Bankruptcy

Under Chapters 7 and 11, property the debtor acquires after the petition date, including salary or wages, is not property of the estate. Support may be enforced against property which is not property of the estate. Therefore, any order assigning wages continues. Under Chapters 12 and 13, the local child support agency must cease collecting money unless it gets approval to continue to collect from the bankruptcy attorney or the debtor. Usually the bankruptcy attorney will permit the continued collection of current support and require that arrears be paid through the plan. The local child support agency should request written authorization be sent by the debtor's attorney, or the debtor, to collect current support only. If this authorization is not received by the next deduction from wages, terminate the notice to withhold. Then, the local child support agency legal staff must move the bankruptcy court for relief from the automatic stay. The local child support agency must block submissions for any tax refund offsets against the non-custodial parent (debtor) for the year of, and the years following the year the petition is filed. The local child support agency may retain tax refund offsets for the year preceding the year the petition is filed. If the non-custodial parent is receiving unemployment insurance benefits and the local child support agency is receiving offsets, they must be limited to an amount that is no more than the current support order, and only if permission is given by the bankruptcy attorney or the debtor to collect current support. The non-custodial parent must also be blocked from any State Licensing Match System submission.

Under all types of bankruptcy, the local child support agency must not submit the non-custodial parent to the Franchise Tax Board Full Collection Program.

5. Determine Legal Action

The local child support agency legal staff will review the case for the next appropriate action. Under Chapters 7 and 11, usually no further legal action will be required. However, if the estate has assets, the local child support agency will need to file a proof of claim form with the bankruptcy court. Under Chapters 12 and 13, the local child support agency legal staff will need to file a motion for relief from automatic stay form and an appearance of child support creditor form if it does not receive permission to continue collecting current support, or needs to collect support from another estate asset. The local child support agency will always need to file a proof of claim if there are any arrears.

6. Determine Next Action

Depending on the case and on information received from the bankruptcy attorney, the local child support agency legal staff may determine to take further action against the non-custodial parent. If there are assets that are part of the estate, the local child support agency must seek relief from the automatic stay to collect against those assets. Without relief from the automatic stay, enforcement actions may only be taken against property that is not part of the estate. Other actions, including civil and criminal contempts, may be taken against the non-custodial parent and are exempt from the automatic stay.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- 11 USC 362, 522, 523, 547.

- 42 USC 656(b).

CM.3.11 Respond to Request for Case Closure

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency consistently takes timely and appropriate action to evaluate all requests for case closure. This action is initiated when the participant or any other jurisdiction sends in a request to close the case. The results of the case closure evaluation, whether the decision is to close or not, are shared with the participant.

Standard:

CM.3.11 The local child support agency timely and appropriately addresses all requests for case closure.

Tasks:

1. Research Case

Each local child support agency shall, upon receiving a request for closing the case, review the case to identify if it meets criteria for closure. For cases that do not meet case closure criteria, the participant is notified of the reason why the case will not be closed.

2. Close Case Per Request

Case closing actions are taken for cases that meet case closure criteria. A trigger is set to stop case-specific enforcement and establishment actions. The case status is updated, and notifications are sent to other parties. The case chronology may be updated after the case is closed. When a case meets closure criteria and its participant is part of other cases, services in the other cases continue for that participant.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- CCR Sections 118020, 118203.
- FC Sections 17306, 17310, 17312.
- 45 CFR 303.11.

CM.3.12 Close Case that Meets Criteria

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency utilizes a process that consistently and accurately applies all the applicable rules of case closure on an ongoing basis to cases eligible for closure consideration.

Standard:

CM.3.12 The local child support agency routinely applies case closure criteria and procedures in determining the eligibility of cases for closure.

Tasks:

1. Validate Case Closure Eligibility

Each local child support agency shall review cases selected for meeting the criteria for closure. Unless exempted by regulation, the recipient of services is notified of the intent to close a case 60 calendar days prior to case closure. For interstate cases, the initiating jurisdiction is notified of the intent to close case.

2. Close Eligible Case

Sixty calendar days after the “intent to close” letter is sent to the custodial parent or other jurisdiction, or if a response is received from the custodial parent or other jurisdiction that he/she agrees with the action, the system automatically stops case specific enforcement and establishment actions. Once specific enforcement and establishment actions have been stopped, the case status is updated, and notifications are sent to other parties. The case chronology may be updated after case is closed.

Performance Measures:

- Number and percentage of cases needing locate without support orders that are eligible for closure.
- Number and percentage of cases with intact families eligible for closure.
- Number and percentage of cases with emancipated children and aid period over one year, and are eligible for closure.
- Number and percentage of cases closed compared with those eligible for closure.
- Number and percentage of cases closed compared with those eligible for closure with lost custodial parent.
- Number and percentage of cases closed compared with those eligible for closure with an emancipated child.

Compliance Measures:

- The local child support agency must close the child support case in accordance with case closure guidelines.

**FINAL WORKING DOCUMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

- The local child support agency must send the custodial parent written notice of closing using required language prior to closure.

Authority:

- CCR Sections 118020, 118203.
- FC Sections 17306, 17310, 17312.
- 45 CFR 302.35, 303.3, 303.11.

**BEST PRACTICES
CASE MANAGEMENT
CM.3 ENFORCEMENT**

CM.3.1 Perform Intercept Activities

CM.3.2 Perform Data Match Activities

CM.3.3 Perform Lien Activities

CM.3.4 Request Interstate Service

CM.3.5 Perform Medical Support Activities

CM.3.6 Perform Security Deposit Activities

CM.3.7 Pursue Court Action Activities

CM.3.8 Submit for Internal Revenue Service Full Collection

CM.3.9 Perform Order/Notice to Withhold Income Activities

CM.3.10 Bankruptcy

- System updates will automatically screen cases with bankruptcy information from being submitted to the Franchise Tax Board full Collection Program.

CM.3.11 Respond to Request for Case Closure

- Capability to manually close cases, with supervisory approval.
- Opportunity to interface with the Welfare system to provide the ability to verify aid status for all participants when researching for case closure.

CM.3.12 Close Case that Meets Criteria

- A system capable of identifying cases which have a participant common to a case being closed.
- When a case meets closure criteria and its participant is part of other cases, those cases should be reviewed.

CM.4 Locate

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies believe in making extraordinary efforts to locate persons and assets in carrying out the child support program. Further, it is believed that available locate sources and tools should be uniformly and consistently applied statewide. Locate activities are both automated and manual. The goal is to ensure that workers statewide have access to and use the most valuable locate sources and tools available. The DCSS and local agencies will identify and use, to the extent possible, the best practices and information available in the debt collection field to ensure that the child support program achieves its program objectives.

CM.4.1 Locate Demographics

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency maintains procedures and processes to ensure complete and timely location of non-custodial parent and, if necessary, custodial party demographic information.

Standard:

CM.4.1 The local child support agency has in place and maintains procedures and processes to facilitate location of non-custodial parent and, if necessary, custodial party demographics.

Task:

1. Locate Demographics

This process attempts to secure personal identifying information on a member, such as social security number, date of birth, address, and employer. Locate activities can occur by automated interface or manual intervention.

Performance Measures:

- Number and percentage of children/cases with the father unknown.
- Number and percentage of cases/NPs needing both locate and paternity establishment.
- Number and percentage of children/cases with multiple possible fathers.
- Number and percentage of cases needing locate for establishment.
- Number and percentage of cases needing locate without support orders that are eligible for closure.
- Number and percentage of cases with current support that are in locate status.
- Number and percentage of cases with arrears due and custodial parent not located.

Compliance Measures:

- If location of the non-custodial parent is necessary, the local child support agency must access all appropriate federal, state and local locate sources, and as appropriate, initiate verification of any information received within 75 calendar days.
- If sufficient identifying information is available, quarterly locate attempts must be made on each case in which the location of the non-custodial parent is needed in order to proceed.
- In no more than 75 calendar days, the local child support agency must immediately act upon new information that may assist in locating the non-custodial parent.

**FINAL WORKING DOCUMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

- If a custodial party provides substantial, credible information regarding the residence or work address of the non-custodial parent, the local child support agency shall initiate an establishment or enforcement action and serve the non-custodial parent, if service is required, within 60 days and inform the custodial party when those actions have been taken.

- Within five business days of determining that contact with a custodial party has been lost and that custodial party must be located because the local child support agency has a child support collection to distribute to that custodial party, the local child support agency shall attempt to locate that custodial party for six months using the same locate resources available for locate of a non-custodial parent.

Authority:

- CCR 113100.

- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17401, 17502, 17505, 17506.

- 42 USC 653.

- 45 CFR 303.3, 303.7, 303.15, 303.35, 303.69, 303.70.

CM.4.2 Locate Assets

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency maintains procedures and processes to ensure complete and timely location of non-custodial parent assets.

Standard:

CM.4.2 The local child support agency has in place and maintains procedures and processes to facilitate location of non-custodial parent assets. These procedures and processes must ensure the time requirements relative to the locate function are met.

Task:

1. Locate Assets

This process attempts to secure asset information on a member, such as employment and financial data. Locate can occur by automated interface or manual intervention.

Performance Measures:

- Number and percentage of cases needing locate for establishment.
- Number and percentage of orders established based on “real ability” (known income).
- Number and percentage of cases with current support that are in locate status.
- Number and percentage of cases brought to judgment within six months that are not making payments.
- Number and percentage of cases brought to judgment within 12 months that are not making payments.
- Number and percentage of cases with arrears and employment verification outstanding.

Compliance Measures:

- In no more than 75 days, the local child support agency must immediately act upon new information that may assist in locating the non-custodial parent.
- If sufficient identifying information is available, quarterly locate attempts must be made on each case in which the location of the non-custodial parent’s assets is needed in order to proceed.

Authority

- CCR 113100.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17502, 17505, 17506.

**FINAL WORKING DOCUMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

- 42 USC 653.
- 45 CFR 303.3, 303.7, 303.15, 303.35, 303.69, 303.70.

CM.4.3 Open Cases for Locate Only

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has in place procedures and requirements for responding to requests received from authorized non-IV-D customers. Examples of these types of services include the courts sending in non-IV-D order information, other entities sending in a non-IV-D request for services, receipt of a non-IV-D payment where no case exists, and/or an applicant sending in a non-IV-D partial service request.

Standard:

CM.4.3 The local child support agency has in place a defined and understood process for responding to service and information requests from non-IV-D customers and potential customers.

Tasks:

1. Update Participant

Receive support order information containing child support provisions (for example, as a result of a divorce dispute). Receive and process non-IV-D partial service requests, such as Federal Parent Locator Service only requests.

2. Create Non-IV-D Case File

A case file is created. Appropriate controls are maintained to ensure that timely responses are received.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- CCR 113200, 113300.
- FC 17306, 17310, 17312, 17212, 17506, 17508, 17514.
- WIC 11478.1.
- 42 USC 653.
- 45 CFR 302.35, 303.3, 303.15, 303.69, 303.70.

**BEST PRACTICES
CASE MANAGEMENT
CM.4 LOCATE**

CM.4.1 Locate Demographics

CM.4.2 Locate Assets

CM.4.3 Open Cases for Locate Only

CHAPTER 5 BUSINESS PROCESS AND SERVICES FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter addresses the Financial Management performance area, the second of three essential business process and services areas that comprise the child support program. The two other areas are Case Management and Customer Service and Satisfaction. Together these three performance areas comprise the essential business processes and services of the child support program.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to providing effective, efficient and highest quality financial management services for our customers. The statutory scheme establishing the statewide child support program sets the vision for the program; a program that operates uniformly, consistently, and effectively to ably meet performance and customer expectations. The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies and other stakeholders, is developing regulations governing all child support business processes. The goal is to achieve uniformity of practice in providing child support services that are responsive to individual customer needs while treating all parties fairly and equitably.

The DCSS and local agencies recognize that sound financial management practices are critical in providing effective child support services and achieving high levels of customer service and satisfaction. Financial management is perhaps the most intricate aspect of the child support program, with complex rules governing collection and distribution of monies collected on behalf of families. There are rules for receipting, accounting and disbursing collections that rely heavily upon maintaining detailed and accurate financial history records and applying monies to various debt types. At the same time, these complex business rules must be applied quickly and accurately to meet child support program requirements and the needs of families. The DCSS and local agencies recognize that family self-sufficiency often depends on expert execution of our financial management duties. Therefore, DCSS and local agencies are committed to establishing and maintaining excellent financial management processes to ensure timely and accurate distribution of child support to families.

The Financial Management performance area has four functional areas: Obligation, Collection, Distribution, and Disbursement. These functions are further defined through delineation of elements and tasks.

FM.1 Obligation

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to ensuring that payment obligations are carefully and accurately tracked at all times. The Obligation function involves all financial activity and processes associated with managing court ordered support obligations, fees, and costs. The obligation process requires accounting for the obligation incurred, amounts past due, the accrual of interest, and the assigning of the obligation to the state in assistance related cases. Obligation also encompasses issuing billing statements to the obligor, issuing monthly support statements to the custodial party, auditing accounts to ensure accuracy of financial activity, and reporting on financial activity. The DCSS and local child support agencies believe that timely and accurate management of the obligation process is a critically important customer service.

FM.1.1 Maintain Accurate Amounts Owed

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency takes all steps to maintain accurate amounts owed, including amounts owed for each type of debt. Local agencies shall act promptly to update obligation amounts when an obligation due date has occurred, or new or modified court order information has been received.

Standard:

FM.1.1 The local child support agency takes all steps to accurately determine amounts owed for each debt type.

Tasks:

1. Establish Account for Amount Owed

Each local child support agency shall create accounts to manage and process support payments owed and paid. There are multiple layers of sub-accounts within the structure of an account to individually track debt types (i.e., child support, family support, spousal support, medical support, fees, childcare costs, etc.) and arrearage types for both principal and interest (i.e., never assigned arrears, permanently assigned arrears, temporarily assigned arrears, conditionally assigned arrears, etc.). Accounting is performed at the case and member level.

Local agencies may open an account or sub-account for a variety of reasons including, but may not be limited to: (a) receipt of an obligation for support as a provision in a Superior Court order; (b) a case exists and payment is received from the non-custodial parent without an order for support (i.e., voluntary payment); (c) a change in payee on a case; and (d) penalty and fee costs are incurred for which there is not an existing sub-account.

2. Clear Prior Period Obligation

Each local child support agency shall, when the obligation due date occurs and a current obligation exists, age accounts before posting the obligation for a new period. Accounts are aged by clearing the control account and moving the now past due amount to an arrears account. Control accounts are set-up per debt type. They reflect the current amount due. The control account is cleared by zeroing it out by the past due amount, a credit entry for the current receivable accounts and a debit entry for the current payable accounts.

When new or modified court order information is received, arrearages incurred, if any, must be calculated, and the resulting interest that has accrued. This is, in effect, aging the accounts for prior periods that may have passed since the date of the court order.

3. Post Current Period Obligation

Each local child support agency shall reset the member control account by posting the current period obligation to a non-custodial parent receivable account (debit), or

accounts in the case of multiple obligations, and posting the amount payable on an obligation to associated member-level payable accounts (credit). Amounts payable on an obligation are at the member level, except for family support. Family support obligations are at the case level.

4. Increase Principal Arrears

Each local child support agency shall post the same amount that cleared the control account to the arrears accounts, a debit entry for the arrears receivable accounts and a credit entry for the arrears payable accounts. Arrears are set up by debt type and arrearage type.

5. Accrue Interest

Each local child support agency shall accrue interest on arrearages. Interest accrues on all California ordered arrearages. Arrearages on out-of-state orders may accrue interest at a different rate than that of California. Like principal arrears, interest arrears are set up by debt type and arrearage type.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency maintains accurate and up to date obligation records.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency calculated interest at least monthly.

Authority:

FM.1.2 Assign and Unassign Arrears

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency assigns arrears to the appropriate debt types when a member or family goes on or off of aid.

Standard:

FM.1.2 The local child support agency has a clear understanding of debt types and timely assigns arrears to the appropriate debt types.

Tasks:

1. Transfer Unassigned and/or Never Assigned Arrearages to Temporarily Assigned Arrearages

Each local child support agency shall temporarily assign to the state as Temporarily Assigned Arrears, any Never Assigned or Unassigned Arrearages occurring when a member (or family) goes on assistance after 9/30/98. Arrearages that accrue while the child (or family) is aided become permanently assigned to the state as Permanently Assigned Arrears.

2. Transfer Temporary Assigned Arrears to Conditionally Assigned Arrears

Each local child support agency shall, when a member (or family) no longer receives assistance after 9/30/98, transfer to a Conditionally Assigned Arrears debt type the total amount of the member's (or family's) Temporarily Assigned Arrears that has not been reimbursed from support payments received.

3. Compute Unassigned Arrearages

Each local child support agency shall ensure that the combination of the Conditionally Assigned Arrears and the Permanently Assigned Arrears do not exceed the families Unreimbursed Assistance Pool. When a family or child (Foster Care) no longer receives assistance, a calculation is performed to determine the amount of arrearages that must be unassigned. First, the Permanently Assigned Arrears are compared to the Unreimbursed Assistance Pool and any amounts of Permanently Assigned Arrears that exceed the Unreimbursed Assistance Pool are transferred to Unassigned During Assistance Arrears. Second, the Conditionally Assigned Arrears are compared to any remaining Unreimbursed Assistance Pool. Any amounts of Conditionally Assigned Arrears that exceed the Unreimbursed Assistance Pool are transferred to Unassigned Pre-Assistance Arrears.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency accurately assigns arrears.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency monitors the case aid status to determine when a case changes to former aid status.

**FINAL WORKING DOCUMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

- Local agency maintains a current unreimbursed assistance pool balance.

Authority:

- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 12-410.13

FM.1.3 Adjust Obligation

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency appropriately adjusts obligations when the non-custodial parent obligation changes.

Standard:

FM.1.3 The local child support agency adjusts obligations appropriately based on changes in the non-custodial parent's obligation.

Tasks:

1. Adjust Current Obligation Amount Due

Each local child support agency shall adjust the current obligation by debt type when an account obligation is modified based on a new or modified court order.

2. Adjust Principal Arrears

Each local child support agency shall adjust arrears balances and update the case with the adjustment information if a change in obligation goes back to a prior period.

3. Adjust Interest Arrears

Each local child support agency shall adjust interest arrears as appropriate if principle arrears balances were adjusted. The interest adjustment will result from the adjustment to principal amount for each arrearage type adjusted. Once the adjustments to the member account have been calculated and posted, account adjustment information is sent to the non-custodial parent and other jurisdictions as warranted.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely and appropriately adjusts obligations.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency maintains accurate account records.

Authority:

FM.1.4 Request for Balance

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely responds to a request for account balance.

Standard:

FM.1.4 The local child support agency timely and accurately responds to requests for account balance.

Tasks:

1. Determine Amount Due on Current Obligation

Each local child support agency shall determine the exact amount due on the current obligation by computing the obligation, collection, and disbursement activities. This amount is forwarded to the next process.

2. Calculate Interest on Arrearages

Each local child support agency shall gather and calculate interest on outstanding arrearage balances. The combination of amount due on the current obligation, principal arrears, and interest on principal arrears is computed to obtain the total amount due on the account. This information is provided to the requesting parties.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely responds to requests for account balance.

Compliance Measures:

- Interest is calculated at a minimum on a monthly basis.

Authority:

FM.1.5 Generate Account History

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely responds to a request for an account history.

Standard:

FM.1.5 The local child support agency timely and accurately responds to requests for account history.

Tasks:

1. Generate Account History

Each local child support agency shall timely generate an account history when requested. Generating an account history requires compiling all information on the account obligation, collection, adjustment, distribution, and disbursement activity for all debt types and arrearage types. An account history also may be requested for certain aspects of the account activity, e.g., a history of all payments made on the account for a specified period of time, the amounts owed for a specified period of time, etc. In such instances, the requested activity data would be compiled, and an account history would be generated for those specific aspects of account activity. The account history should be provided in a format that is clear and concise.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely responds to requests for account history.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 12-108 and 12-425(o)(3)

FM.1.6 Perform Account Audit and Prepare Audit Report

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency responds accurately and timely to a request for an audit of an account.

Standard:

FM.1.6 The local child support agency timely and accurately responds to requests for account audit.

Tasks:

1. Perform Account Audit

Each local child support agency shall timely perform an audit of an account when requested. Audit requests may come from internal or external entities. An account audit is a manual process by which the account information is analyzed to assure accurate account balances and/or account history. An audit may result in an adjustment to the account based on the findings. Account audits and any resulting adjustments are recorded.

2. Prepare Audit Report

Each local child support agency shall timely prepare and send to the requesting party an audit report detailing the findings of an audit.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely responds to requests for an account audit.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

FM.1.7 Generate Billing Statement

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides their non-custodial parents with a monthly billing statement.

Standard:

FM.1.7 The local child support agency provides monthly billing statements for non-custodial parents.

Tasks:

1. Generate Billing Statement

Each local child support agency shall generate and send to non-custodial parents a monthly billing statement detailing current support and arrearages (principal and interest) owed. Statements are sent to non-custodial parents that have a confirmed address and do not have a suppression placed on their bill. The billing statements include information on the amount of support payments applied on each of their cases. Special instructions, comments, or standardized messages may be included on all or a subset of the billing statements.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency provides monthly billing statements to parents owing support.
- Local agency has procedures to update the address for non-custodial parents.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

FM.1.8 Generate Monthly Statement of Collections and Distribution

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides custodial parents with a monthly statement of collection and distribution.

Standard:

FM.1.8 The local child support agency provides monthly collection and distribution statements to custodial parents.

Tasks:

1. Generate Monthly Statement of Collections and Distribution

Each local child support agency shall generate and send to each IV-D payee and recipient monthly statements of support collected and disbursed. The monthly statement shall indicate the amount of current support and arrearages collected, and the amount of support that was disbursed to the family.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency generates monthly statements of collections and distribution.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency sends the Monthly Statement of Collections and Distribution, CS 916, dated (03/02) to all custodial parties within 45 days from the end of the statement period when there is either a collection or distribution of support during the period covered by the statement.
- Local agency sends a Monthly Statement of Collections and Distribution, CS 916, dated (03/02), and a Notice of Important Information, CS 917, dated (03/02), to each custodial party who is a recipient of child support services.

Authority:

- Title 22, Division 13, Chapter 9, Article 4, Section 119184, Notices.

**BEST PRACTICES
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
FM.1 OBLIGATION**

FM.1.1 Maintain Accurate Amounts Owed

FM.1.2 Assign and Unassign Arrears

FM.1.3 Adjust Obligation

FM.1.4 Request for Balance

FM.1.5 Generate Account History

FM.1.6 Perform Account Audit and Prepare Audit Report

FM.1.7 Generate Billing Statement

- Generate Monthly Billing Statements when requested by the non-custodial parent outside the normal billing statement processing cycle.
- All the non-custodial parent's cases are summarized on one billing statement.

FM.1.8 Generate Monthly Statement of Collections and Distribution

- Generate Monthly Statement of Collections and Distribution when requested by the custodial party outside the normal billing statement processing cycle.

FM.2 Collection

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to timely and accurately processing collections received on behalf of families. The collections function and process consist of accurately accounting for and associating support monies received from an obligor by the child support program on behalf of families and children. Collections perform the following child support functions: batching, receipting, and associating the payment with the obligor, reconciling, and depositing the money received to pay support. Support collections are received electronically or manually from a variety of external agencies (e.g., employers, other jurisdictions and individuals).

The DCSS and local agencies believe that they have a critical role in the collection function. Local agencies must effectively and timely receipt and associate payment with the obligor, reconcile, and deposit the money received to pay support. Timely and accurate determination of how money collected will be applied, including resolution of undistributed collections, is of utmost importance and directly impacts the well being of families.

FM.2.1 Receive and Process Collections

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely and accurately records payments (collections) received. Further, local agencies shall record any other information received that enable effective case management, including change of address, employer, or other information.

Standard:

FM.2.1 The local child support agency receives and timely records collections and other information.

Tasks:

1. Establish Collection Sorting Process

Each local child support agency shall establish an effective collection receipting process that results in timely handling and posting of payments. Collections are payments received from multiple payment sources via the mail, in person (walk-in), or electronically transferred via electronic fund transfer. Collections can be positive or negative. Positive collections increase the funds available for deposit, e.g., money orders, wage withholding and cash. Negative collections decrease the funds available for deposit, e.g., other jurisdiction collection fees, Internal Revenue Service negative adjustments and returned bank deposits, such as non-sufficient funds or account closed. Local agencies shall timely and accurately endorse collections received and record any accompanying information.

Generally, local agencies use a process that groups together all endorsable collections in manageable batches (e.g., a group of checks that are associated by payment source). A payment source identifies the origin (e.g., external entity or agency) and the enforcement method used to obtain the support payment (e.g., wage assignment, writ, tax intercept). If the collection cannot be endorsed (e.g., check is unsigned or made payable to someone other than the child support agency), the collection is considered an unacceptable collection, and is returned.

A source document including individual collection details of the batch is prepared. The batch information is recorded and assigned a unique batch identification number. This information includes the payment source, receipt date (legal date of collection), payment type, obligor, receipt amount, detail amount and number of records in the batch. Local agencies may also identify the actual receipt date and the system processing date. The batches are then reconciled. The total dollar amount of all batches entered must equal the total of all collections registered on the source document. To maintain cash handling integrity, the source document is forwarded to a separate group of individuals who will receipt the collection. The actual collections are deposited.

Some methods of payment require different processing methods. For example, cash collections are uniquely batched and placed in a security deposit box. Electronic fund transfers are automatically processed when an employer or payer's bank electronically

forwards the money along with collection information detail to the local agency's bank. If a collection is received in a foreign currency, the collection is temporarily placed in suspense. The collection is recorded and assigned a unique batch ID but held until the foreign exchange rate is received and the currency is converted to US dollars.

2. Return Unacceptable Collection

Each local child support agency shall return collections unacceptable for deposit to the source (i.e., individual or agency) with an explanation as to why the collection was rejected. Unacceptable collections include unsigned checks or checks made payable to someone other than the child support agency. The unprocessed check or warrant is returned. The case is updated with the appropriate information (e.g., date returned, warrant number, source, and notification letter sent date), or listed on a return check log if the case is not identified.

3. Receipt Collection

Each local child support agency shall record the collection information and assign each collection a unique identifying number (i.e., receipt number) using the source document received from the batch collection process. If a collection is received on behalf of more than one payer (e.g., employer provides one warrant on behalf of multiple payers) the total collection and the individual payer collection amounts are assigned unique receipt numbers. These receipt numbers must be linked. The individual payer collection receipt numbers must be associated with the employer warrant receipt number.

When collections are received over the counter, a physical receipt is generated and provided to the payer. The receipt number is recorded and maintained.

Receipts and batches must be reconciled, with the total of all the collections receipted equaling the total of all the collections batched.

4. Identify Collection

Each local child support agency shall identify collections with a member and/or case by associating each receipt with a member. Collections unable to be associated by a receipt to a member are considered unidentified (refer to FM.2.2 Undistributed Collections).

5. Deposit Collection

Each local child support agency shall reconcile the physical collections with the collection detail information maintained. The total amount of collections must equal what is available for daily deposit. A deposit slip is generated, the monies deposited, and the appropriate trust fund(s) are updated.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely and accurately sorts collections received.

- Local agency timely returns collections that cannot be processed.
- Local agency timely receipts and identifies collection.

- Local agency timely deposits collections.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency obtains and records legal date of collection for payments received.

Authority:

- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 12-101(d)

FM.2.2 Actively Work Undistributed Collections

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that local child support agencies proactively manage undistributed collection amounts to ensure timely and appropriate distribution to families. Local agencies identify collections with a member and/or case by associating each receipt; however, there are some collections that cannot be readily associated to a member and are considered unidentified. Also, some collections cannot be distributed when the local agency is unable to locate custodial parties or non-custodial parents, etc.

The DCSS and local agencies have worked during the last two years to accurately identify the true amount of undistributed collections, the reasons for non-distribution, and required swift actions to be taken statewide to reduce the amount to the lowest level possible. The outcome of this effort has been to accurately identify the undistributed amount statewide and by each local agency. Further, the total undistributed amount by local agency is now identified by reason or type with strict rules for actions that each agency must take to work the accounts. The DCSS and local agencies are committed to timely distributing the highest possible amount of collections received to families.

Standard:

FM.2.2 The local child support agency monitors its undistributed collections amount and takes ongoing proactive steps to ensure distribution of the greatest possible amount to families.

Tasks:

1. Track Undistributed Collections

Each local child support agency shall identify collections that remain undistributed at the end of each month on DCSS Form CS 34, Monthly Report of Collections and Distributions. In addition, each local agency shall report in greater detail the nature of the amount that remains undistributed at the end of each month on the DCSS Form CS 35, Supplemental to Monthly Report of Collections and Distributions. The Form CS 35 reports collections by source and undistributed collection amounts by category and age of the amount. Each local agency shall monitor its undistributed collections.

2. Take Action to Distribute Collections

Each local child support agency shall take proactive steps to ensure that undistributed collection amounts are kept to the smallest amounts possible, by, among other things, identifying and distributing returned payments and locating custodial parties. The DCSS and local agencies value timely distribution of collections to families and work to ensure this end. The DCSS issued instructions in mid-2001 regarding steps that should be taken to work each category of undistributed collections. Local agencies shall remain vigilant in their efforts to reduce, and keep at the lowest level possible, the amount of undistributed collections. If the custodial party cannot be located, the local child support shall use all available locate sources to locate the party. If at the end of six months, the

custodial party cannot be located, the undistributed collection is returned to the non-custodial parent.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency routinely monitors its undistributed collections amount by category and takes proactive steps to keep the amounts as low as possible.

Compliance Measures:

- Submission of CS 34 and CS 35 by 15th calendar day after end of month; to permit DCSS to submit OCSE 34A within 30 days after end of quarter.

Authority:

FM.2.3 Resolve Collection Exceptions

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency immediately resolves collection exceptions. These exceptions include, but may not be limited to, unidentified payment, non-sufficient funds, closed account notification from the financial institution, or a returned collection.

Standard:

FM.2.3 The local child support agency works to timely resolve collection exceptions and monitors exception amounts by type and age.

Tasks:

1. Resolve Collection Exceptions

Each local child support agency shall timely conduct additional research and/or activities to resolve collections that could not be processed under the normal collection routine (e.g. unidentified collections, NSF's, returned disbursements).

2. Resolve Overpayments

Each local child support agency shall only recover overpayments made to custodial parties when the custodial party grants permission to recover the amount from his/her child support payments. If the custodial party does not grant permission, the local child support agency may recover the overpaid amount from the custodial party's last unassigned arrears payment.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely works to resolve collection exceptions as evidenced by balances by type.
- Local agency resolves overpayments.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency does not charge the non-custodial parent any returned check fees.
- Local agency appropriately processes warrants returned undeliverable/un-cashed.

Authority:

- Family Code, Section 17502.
- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 12-430(k).
- Federal Action Transmittal 97-13, Question and Answer #13.
- FSD Letter 89-16 and 96-16.

FM.2.4 Reconcile Collections

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency performs daily reconciliation of collections and deposits.

Standard:

FM.2.4 The local child support agency daily reconciles collections and deposits.

Tasks:

1. Reconcile Collections

Each local child support agency shall reconcile collections against the financial institutions bank statement. The financial statement contains detailed information on all deposits and non-sufficient funds. If discrepancies are found, information must be exchanged, discrepancies resolved, and, if appropriate, cases are then updated accordingly.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency performs daily reconciliation of collections and deposits; any discrepancies are researched and resolved.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

**BEST PRACTICES
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
FM.2 COLLECTION**

FM.2.1 Receive and Process Collections

- The use of imaging may provide the ability to automatically capture and store information during the batching of collections process.
- Automatic interfaces with financial institutions through on-line access to child support accounts during the batching and/or deposit of collections.

FM.2.2 Actively Work Undistributed Collections

FM.2.3 Resolve Collection Exceptions

FM.2.4 Reconcile Collections

FM.3 Distribution

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize the importance of appropriately distributing collections to families. As with the other financial management functions, the distribution function involves complex determinations of how to apply the funds by case(s), type of debt, and debt owner. It is critical that the process of distribution be executed expertly and timely to ensure that monies are available to families.

Distribution is the child support function that determines how money collected will be applied (distributed) to a case(s). Once a support collection (payment) is received and identified, there are three levels of distribution. The first level is the association and allocation of collections to the non-custodial parent's (payer) case or across multiple cases. The second level is the distribution of collections within the case to the non-custodial parent's support ordered obligations, arrearages and interest. The third level is the welfare distribution of collections that were applied to support obligations that are assigned to the state as a condition of receiving CalWORKs and/or foster care. Welfare distribution determines the amount that must be paid to the family (or foster care child) and the amount that must be repaid (recouped) to the federal, state and county governments.

While the distribution functions is difficult enough, there is added complexity when adjustments must be made to collections previously distributed. This may result in backing out the collection from all cases and members, the re-allocation of collections, and/or reapplying collections to other obligations within the case or to other cases. Adjustments include placing and releasing collection holds, creating custodial party offsets for overpayments, and voiding lost, stolen, mutilated, un-cashed, and undelivered warrants.

The DCSS and local agencies recognize the complexity of this process and seek to ensure that families are served timely and accurately.

FM.3.1 Allocate Identified Collections

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency allocates identified collections to the non-custodial parent's case(s) using current rules of allocation.

Standard:

FM.3.1 The local child support agency appropriately allocates collections in accordance with rules of allocation.

Tasks:

1. Associate Obligations and Collections

Each local child support agency shall timely and accurately associate obligations and collections by determining which case(s) is appropriate to receive the collection. In the future, associating obligations and collections will include both Title IV-D and non-IV-D cases. Distribution is made when collections are received and linked to a non-custodial parent (payer), and when previously held collections are released. Local agencies shall allocate collections in accordance with allocation rules based on monthly support obligations, arrears status, and the IV-D status of each linked case.

Collections not identified to a payer do not go through the allocation process until they are identified. These collections are considered "undistributed collections" and are subject to required proactive steps by each local agency to identify and appropriately distribute the monies (see FM. 2.2).

2. Allocate Collections To Cases

Each local child support agency shall timely and appropriately allocate collections between associated case(s). If the collection is associated with more than one case, the collection is allocated to the case using a defined set of allocation rule calculations specified by the DCSS Regulations. Allocation includes the sharing of collections between one or more Title IV-D cases and/or non-IV-D cases. Collections that were allocated to a case or multiple cases are updated in the case(s).

3. Release Manual Allocation Hold

Each local child support agency shall timely resolve and release manual allocation holds on collections. Local agencies may place a manual allocation hold on a case pending resolution of specific circumstances and/or or disputes. Upon resolution, the local agency shall release the hold so that any future collections will go through the normal allocation rules as specified by DCSS. Released manual allocation holds are updated into the case(s).

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency correctly allocates payments received from an obligor with more than one case.

Authority:

- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 12-415

FM.3.2 Distribution of Allocated Collections

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency distributes allocated collections in accordance with distribution hierarchy regulations.

Standard:

FM.3.2 The local child support agency distributes collections in accordance with current distribution hierarchy requirements.

Tasks:

1. Distribution of Collections Within Case

Each local child support agency shall use the allocated case collection information to distribute the collection to the current support obligations and arrearages (interest and principal) owed for each appropriate member within the case. Collections shall be distributed in accord with the required distribution hierarchy.

When a manual distribution hold was placed through the adjustment process, the collection is manually distributed to a specific obligation, arrearage type, or member, as appropriate.

Collections may be distributed as pre-paid futures (e.g. automatic bond or trust collections deposited that are in excess of the current and arrearage obligations) and released for distribution within the case on a specified date.

The distributed case/member collections are updated in the case.

2. Release Manual Distribution Hold

Each local child support agency shall timely release manual distribution holds when the circumstances and/or dispute causing the hold are resolved. The hold is released to permit any future money to go through the normal required distribution hierarchy. Released manual distribution holds are updated into the case.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency makes correct payment distributions based on required distribution hierarchy.

Authority:

- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 12-420

FM.3.3 Distribute Assistance Collections

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency accurately utilizes financial interface information provided by the IV-A agency and provides accurate distribution information to the IV-A agency.

Standard:

FM.3.3 The local child support agency uses and accurately reports Title IV-A program distribution information.

Tasks:

1. Associate Collections With IV-A Cases/Members

Each local child support agency shall associate collections that were applied to assigned current support and arrears the IV -A/IV-E case and member assistance grant information and the IV-D case and member information. The associated information is updated into the case.

2. Perform Welfare Distribution

Each local child support agency shall retrieve for welfare distribution (and recoupment) collections that were applied to assigned child, family and spousal support obligations. In addition, adjustments made to assistance related cases and members are used in the welfare distribution process.

The local child support agency shall provide to the IV-A agency welfare distribution information and the current support collection amount.

The California Department of Social Services will be provided with collection and demographic information on behalf of children receiving Child Welfare Services and/or Case Management Services (foster care).

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency notifies IV-A agency of the amount of the support payment received within ten working days, after the end of the month in which the payment was received.
- Local agency distributes support collections (payments) in accordance with welfare distribution process.
- Local agency maintains current and accurate un-reimbursed assistance pool balance.

Authority:

- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Sections 12-425.
- FSD Letter 98-12, Question #29.

FM.3.4 Adjust Collections Previously Distributed

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely identifies and corrects collection and distribution errors.

Standard:

FM.3.4 The local child support agency timely makes collections adjustments based on additional information or identification of errors.

Tasks:

1. Identify and Remedy Collection Errors

Each local child support agency has processes and procedures designed to detect errors in collection distribution. Errors and adjustments may include, but are not limited to: the findings of an account audit; identification of assistance related collections previously distributed; incorrect distribution within the case or between cases; and notification of direct payments received by the custodial party from the non-custodial parent. Adjustments may be requested by the customer or caseworker.

2. Adjust and/or Reallocate Collections to Cases

Each local child support agency shall timely adjust collections when deemed appropriate. Adjustment types for collections previously allocated require the original allocation information, the case/member information, the monthly support obligation and arrearage information. Some adjustment types will result in the collection being adjusted on monies that have been allocated to more than one case.

To make an adjustment, a hold may be placed on the non-custodial parent's account to prevent reapplication to the same case. The original receipt information is obtained that links the original application of the collection. After the adjustment is made, the collection may be re-allocated across multiple cases. The hold will be released after the adjustment is made.

3. Adjust Collections Within Case

Each local child support agency shall timely adjust collections when deemed appropriate. Adjustments types and collections previously distributed within the case require the original distribution information from the system. Adjustments to collections distributed within the case may result in a hold placed on the obligation and arrearages for the affected member(s).

A hold may have been placed on the case, or on a member within the case. The collection may be backed out without reapplication, backed out and reapplied to same case (different obligation or arrearage), backed out and reapplied to another case or credited to the case.

Adjustments that back out collections may create custodial party offsets.

A hold may be released after the adjustment is made or kept on the case or member.

Some adjustments result in the need to provide notices to the custodial party and non-custodial parent, such as direct payments. Other adjustments result in notification to other jurisdictions (direct payments) and the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement – Financial Management Services (refunds to non-custodial parent from Internal Revenue Service tax refund intercepts).

Adjustments from un-cashed and undeliverable non-custodial parent refunds will result in tracking the 2-year time frame for providing disbursement instructions for reverting money to General Fund.

4. Adjust Assistance Distributions

Each local child support agency shall timely adjust assistance distributions when deemed appropriate. Adjustments made within the case that affect assigned support collections and adjustment information from the welfare department will be retrieved from the case. The original assistance distribution information is needed to adjust assistance distributions. For example, adjustments from the IV -A agency on collections that have been applied within the case to Title IV-A and Title IV-E recipients affect the un-reimbursed assistance pool.

Information on adjustments to assistance related collections will be provided to the IV -A agency.

Adjustments to collections made on behalf of children receiving Child Welfare Services/Case Management Services (foster care) will be provided to California Department of Social Services.

5. Void and Reissue Disbursement

Each local child support agency shall have in place procedures to issue a replacement warrant when a request is received. The original warrant will be voided and may be reissued and updated into the case.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- The local child support agency shall notify the IV-A agency when it learns that a support payment was paid directly to and retained by a current assistance obligor.
- When a custodial party is overpaid, the local child support agency only recovers the overpaid amount from the custodial party when he/she grants the local child support agency permission to recover the overpayment from his/her support payments; or, if the custodial party does not grant permission, the local child support agency may recover the overpaid amount from the custodial party's last unassigned arrears payment.

**FINAL WORKING DOCUMENT
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QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

- Warrants returned undeliverable/un-cashed are processed pursuant to DCSS regulations.

Authority:

- Family Code Section 17502.
- Manual of Policies and Procedures 12-430(k).
- Federal Action Transmittal 97-13, Questions and Answer #13.
- FSD Letters 89-16 and 96-16.

FM.3.5 Generate Disbursement Instructions

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency generates instructions to be followed when a collection has been received, identified, allocated, distributed in accordance with current regulations. This includes pre determined county, state and federal shares of recoupment.

Standard:

FM.3.5 The local child support agency generates correct instructions for disbursement of collections.

Tasks:

1. Generate Disbursement Instructions

Each local child support agency shall generate disbursement instructions after the distribution process has occurred. The case will be updated with the distribution amount, date of distribution, payee, check recipient, information needed on disbursement notices, as well as, the disbursement instructions.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency disbursement instructions comply with requirements.

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
FM.3 DISTRIBUTION

FM.3.1 Allocate Identified Collections

FM.3.2 Distribution of Allocated Collections

FM.3.3 Distribute Assistance Collections

FM.3.4 Adjust Collections Previously Distributed

FM.3.5 Generate Disbursement Instructions

FM.4 Disbursement

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize the importance of timely dispersing collection payments to families. Disbursement is the support function that issues or transfers the support payment according to disbursement instructions. Disbursement is made by fund transfer, electronic fund transfer/electronic data interchange, or by generation of a check, warrant, or payment voucher. Information about the disbursement is recorded for reconciliation purposes. The DCSS and local agencies commit to timely and accurately disburse collections received to families and to governments for the repayment of aid.

FM.4.1 Generate Disbursement

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency disburses collections appropriately when disbursement instructions are received, or a warrant is voided due to a misprint or being torn during the printing process.

Standard:

FM.4.1 The local child support agency timely and appropriately disburses collections.

Tasks:

1. Generate Disbursement

Each local child support agency shall identify all cases requiring money to be paid after the receipts are processed (allocated and distributed). A disbursement instruction is received for payment to be issued. The disbursement is made by fund transfer, electronic fund transfer/electronic data interchange, or by generation of a check, warrant, or payment voucher.

The recipients of the disbursement can be, but are not limited to, the custodial party, the non-custodial parent, another Jurisdiction, the IV -A agency, a county fiscal agency, or a state agency. The disbursement is released per instructions received.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency sends never-assistance case payments to the family or interstate initiating agency within two working days of receipt. This applies to all payment sources except Internal Revenue Service. The exception is 30 calendar days for an Internal Revenue Service intercept payment.
- Local agency forwards disregard payments to the CalWORKS or KinGAP custodial party within two working days of receipt.
- Local agency forwards collections that are due to the former assistance family to the custodial party within two working days of receipt. Collections that are not due to the family, i.e., Permanently Assigned Arrears, must go through the welfare distribution process.
- Local agency forwards excess payments to the CalWORKs or KinGAP custodial party within 15 calendar days, after the end of the month in which a support payment was received.
- Local agency forwards excess and/or pass-on payments to the county welfare department on behalf of a child receiving Foster Care within 15 calendar days, after the end of the month in which a support payment was received.

**FINAL WORKING DOCUMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

- Local agency pays to the family collections applied against futures and not held within 2 days of receipt in former and never assistance cases.
- Local agency forwards collections made on behalf of another state to the initiating state within two working days of receipt.
- Local agency distributes and disburses collections received from a responding state within two working days of receipt.

Authority:

- Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 12-108 and 12-430(d) and (h).

FM.4.2 Void Disbursement

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency follows instructions received to void a disbursement transaction.

Standard:

FM.4.2 The local child support agency timely voids disbursements.

Tasks:

1. Void Disbursement Transaction

Each local child support agency shall timely void a disbursement transaction. Upon receiving instructions, a disbursement will be voided, the case will be updated, and a notice will be sent to the financial institution, when appropriate. Disbursements are voided when they are made in error, when the receipt is adjusted or misapplied, when there is a change of custody, when they are stale-dated and when there is a loss of contact with the payee.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

FM.4.3 Reconcile Disbursement

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency reconciles disbursements according to disbursement instructions.

Standard:

FM.4.3 The local child support agency reconciles disbursements daily.

Tasks:

1. Reconcile Disbursement

Each local child support agency shall reconcile disbursements to ensure that all monies disbursed balance with disbursement instructions. Reconciliation includes all types of disbursements including fund transfer, electronic fund transfer/electronic data interchange, and generation of a check, warrant, or payment voucher. Reconciliation is subject to local practice and may be external to the local child support agency.

Performance Measures:

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
FM.4 DISBURSEMENT

FM.4.1 Generate Disbursement

- Local agencies shall take all necessary steps to ensure that the correct party receives payment in situation where payments are made to another party in error.

FM.4.2 Void Disbursement

FM.4.3 Reconcile Disbursement

CHAPTER 6

BUSINESS PROCESS AND SERVICES

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SATISFACTION

This chapter addresses Customer Service and Satisfaction, the third performance category included within the business process and services performance area. The Customer Service and Satisfaction performance category identifies functions, elements and tasks as well as desired results, expressed as standards, and performance measures. The Customer Service and Satisfaction business process category has six functional areas: Service Planning, Accessibility to Services and Information, Outreach to Customers and Communities, Customer Focused Business Processes and Services, Customer Inquiry and Complaint Response, and Customer Satisfaction.

The Customer Services and Satisfaction performance category is central to operation of an effective child support program. Significant new resources have been dedicated during the past two years to enhance customer service and respond to customer needs. The initial focus on customer service was intended to bring this central value of the program to the forefront in efforts to restructure California's child support program. The goal was to integrate sound public and private sector customer service and satisfaction philosophies and practices into every aspect of child support program operations. Local child support agencies responded to the early Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Initiative by implementing a wide array of service enhancements responsive to the needs of local customers and communities. This performance category now reflects the essential customer service and satisfaction functions, elements and tasks illuminated during the past two years.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to making California's child support program the best in the nation. This effort is founded on the belief that excellent customer service will produce superior outcomes in achieving federal and state performance measures and result in increased parental support to children. A key indicator of success will be the ability to consistently provide excellent customer service to all those who seek child support program services and/or in other ways interface with the program. Customer perceptions and opinions about the services received will be a central measure of child support program success. Customer service and satisfaction is an integral part of delivering child support services—a primary reflection of the manner in which services are provided and received by customers.

CSS.1 Service Planning

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies value the participation of customers, child support program stakeholders, and the general public in planning, designing, operating, and evaluating California's child support program. Participation in these activities may and in fact should occur through a variety of means, if widespread and diverse input is to be attained. Broad public participation in the child support program enhances opportunities to precisely define service desires and expectations thereby leading to significantly improved opportunity to provide customer responsive services.

In addition, the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies believe that detailed understanding of the characteristics of local communities and the populations served and/or eligible for service is fundamental to effective child support program planning and operational decision-making. There is a shared commitment to seek out local and general population data as well as child support customer research to further inform child support program service planning and delivery. Local and general population data includes that available from local planning entities, state demographic agencies, and others. Research specific to child support program customers includes, but is not limited to, information gathered from the Collectibility Study of the characteristics of persons holding a child support debt as well as the debt itself, and the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Satisfaction Baseline Survey. This type of information is critically important to child support program service planning and is a necessary element in achieving effective customer service.

CSS.1.1 Determine Demographics and Customer Characteristics

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency thoroughly assesses and understands the demographics of local communities and the characteristics of customers that it is responsible for serving. This includes current customers as well as those eligible for child support program services. Such an understanding is foundational to ensuring that child support program services are accessible and delivered in a manner that recognizes the needs of communities and persons served.

Standard:

CSS.1.1 The local child support agency uses a service planning process that incorporates use of local community demographic and customer characteristic information.

Tasks:

1. Consider Demographic Information

Each local child support agency shall identify and consider local community and population demographic data in its child support program service planning efforts. Understanding the demographic make-up and population trends of the service area helps to illuminate the manner in which fundamental business processes and services should be approached. Race, ethnicity, income, language, transportation, workforce, housing, and many other characteristics may all play a role in influencing customer service planning. Local child support agencies should use demographic data collected locally by various planning and service departments and/or data available statewide from population research entities.

2. Consider the Characteristics of Customers

Each local child support agency shall identify and consider the characteristics of customers served and/or eligible for services in its child support program service planning efforts. Again, understanding the characteristics of the population served and eligible for services helps to illuminate the manner in which fundamental business processes and services should be approached. This information also is important to ensuring that child support program services are accessible; without this information populations may go un- or under-served.

3. Consider Customer Characteristics that Influence Service Approach

Each local child support agency shall identify and consider the characteristics of their current clients that may influence the service approach. An analysis of customers (both custodial parents and non-custodial parents) is likely to illuminate the levels of readiness, willingness and ability to comply with child support obligations. The Department of Child Support Services Collectibility Study is yielding important findings in this area with regard to California's child support debt. The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies will use this data together with other

research findings to make informed and structured business decisions that take into consideration the characteristics of the individual holding the debt.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency uses demographic and customer characteristic data in planning and designing services.

- Local agency assesses customer characteristics to inform its case management (collection and enforcement) approach.

Compliance Measures:

- Community and customer characteristics data are collected and used.

Authority:

- DCSS customer service and civil rights regulations.

CSS.1.2 Establish Local Customer Service Advisory Body

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and maintains a local advisory body to provide ongoing direct input and advice to local child support program planning and operations. The Advisory Body is comprised of customers, community advocates, employers, Title IV-A agency, courts, and others who interface and/or have an interest in the operation of the child support program. It is also intended that this body provide advice on cultural competency and linguistic accessibility, unless another body is separately and specifically charged with this responsibility.

Standard:

CSS.1.2 The local child support agency has in place a local customer service advisory body charged with providing input and advice to the planning and delivery of child support program services.

Task:

1. Provide Local Customer Service Advisory Body

Each local child support agency shall establish and maintain a local customer service advisory body comprised of specified members charged with providing input and advice on child support program operating practices. The advisory body will meet at least quarterly and perform tasks outlined in the Department of Child Support Services customer service regulations, including review and comment on the local Customer Service Plan and quarterly progress reports; provide input and advice to the development of local programs, procedures, practices; provide input and advice on cultural and linguistic issues and competency; and assist in planning the solicitation of broad-based customer and public input to program planning and operations.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has a local customer service advisory body that effectively provides input to child support program planning, design, and operations.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency customer service advisory body meets membership, meeting frequency, scope of involvement, and other requirements.

Authority:

- DCSS customer service and civil rights regulations

CSS.1.3 Solicit Widespread Customer and Community Input

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides appropriate ways through which to solicit broad-based customer and public input to child support program service planning, design, operation, and evaluation. Such input should be gathered in a way that permits the participation of all persons reflecting the diversity of the community served. The outcome of these efforts is to better determine and define customer expectations, desires and service needs.

Standard:

CSS.1.3 The local child support agency proactively and routinely solicits input to service planning, design, operation and evaluation from persons served, eligible to be served, and the general public.

Tasks:

1. Provide Means for Customer and Public Input

Each local child support agency offers a variety of ways in which customers and the general public may participate in the planning, design, operation and evaluation of child support program services. The local agency routinely and proactively offers customers and the public opportunities to provide input through varied means including, but not limited to, meetings and forums, periodic surveys, telephone sampling of recent customers, and written solicitations. The feedback (expectations, desires and service needs) gathered from customer and public opinion solicitations are incorporated into service planning and operational decision-making.

2. Gather Point of Contact Input

Each local child support agency captures customer input received in the normal course of business operations. Point of contact input refers to customer opinions and information gained tangentially from all public contact areas and positions including, but not limited to, receptionists, telephone answerers in all offices, secretarial support, and security personnel. The local agency captures customer feedback gained through point of contact positions and incorporates it into service planning and operational decision-making.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has varied methods to routinely solicit broad-based customer and public input and effectively incorporates the feedback into child support program planning and operational decision-making.
- Local agency has procedures to capture customer input received tangentially through point of contact positions and effectively incorporates the feedback into child support program planning and operational decision-making.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.1.4 Consider Customer Service Satisfaction Information

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency considers and uses, as appropriate, information gathered through statewide and local customer service satisfaction surveys, inquiry and complaint data, and other customer data as input to local child support program service planning, design, operation, and evaluation.

Standard:

CSS.1.4 The local child support agency incorporates information gathered through statewide and local customer service satisfaction surveys as well as other customer satisfaction data into its child support program service planning and operational decision-making.

Tasks:

1. Consider Statewide Customer Service Satisfaction Baseline Survey Data

Each local child support agency shall consider and incorporate as appropriate into local child support program services planning and operational decision-making the information gathered through the statewide customer service satisfaction baseline survey conducted in 2001 and any subsequent follow-up surveys. The baseline survey offers insight into customer opinions statewide as well as locally that may be useful in planning child support program services and operational decision-making. This information is intended to augment information captured through other local customer satisfaction surveys, if available.

2. Consider Local Customer Service Satisfaction Information

Each local child support agency shall consider and incorporate into local child support program services planning and operational decision-making the information gathered through local customer service satisfaction surveys and/or other customer feedback mechanisms.

3. Consider Other Customer Satisfaction Data

Each local child support agency shall consider and incorporate into local child support program services planning and operational decision-making the information gathered through other customer satisfaction data collection efforts. For example, data collected through local customer inquiry and response, complaint resolution, and state hearing processes may provide useful customer satisfaction information.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency uses, as appropriate, customer service information gathered through the Statewide Customer Satisfaction Baseline Survey.
- Local agency uses customer service information gathered through local customer service satisfaction surveys and/or other customer feedback mechanisms.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- The Department of Child Support Services Statewide Customer Service Baseline Survey.

CSS.1.5 Develop Local Customer Service Plan

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency develops and implements a Customer Service Plan that provides the local roadmap for focusing on customer service and satisfaction in the delivery of child support program services. It is further the intent that Local Customer Service Plans will begin to address the full repertoire of functions, elements, and tasks, covered within this performance category—Customer Service and Satisfaction—of the child support program business process and services performance area.

Standard:

CSS.1.5 The local child support agency has in place a Customer Service Plan that provides the local roadmap for providing exceptional customer service.

Tasks:

1. Develop Local Customer Service Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement a local Customer Service Plan that provides the roadmap for activities that are undertaken to achieve exceptional customer service and satisfaction. Beginning in November 2000, local Customer Service Plans were required to address any activities within five program components: Public Outreach, Access to the child support program, Services to Encourage child support program Participation, Working with the Courts, and Training. Further, local plans were to include, at a minimum, information to demonstrate the specific customer service activities to be provided, and how those activities will be measured for effectiveness.

Since that time the Customer Service Initiative has evolved, becoming an integral part of child support program business processes. Local customer service planning and operations are now expected to incorporate the full range of functions, elements and tasks identified within this Customer Service and Satisfaction performance category. Thus, local Customer Service Plans should address each of the six functional areas, including core elements required of all local child support agencies, and optional activities designed to address local customer and community needs.

2. Consult Customers In Developing Local Customer Service Plan

Each local child support agency shall consult with interested individuals and groups including, but not limited to, custodial and non-custodial parents, child support advocate organization, and current and former child support program customers, in developing and updating local Customer Service Plans (refer to CSS.1.2 and CSS.1.3). The purpose of this consultation is to provide input to the local agency about the importance of services being offered, satisfaction indicators, and general guidance on approach to delivery of child support program services. The consultation may be formal and/or informal but the process used is described in local plans.

3. Submit Quarterly Progress Reports

Each local child support agency shall submit quarterly progress reports on the status of implementation of the local Customer Service Plan. Progress reports at a minimum detail the current status of the Ombudsperson Program (i.e., organizational design and staffing—numbers and qualifications), local Customer Service Plan activities, outcomes expected and achieved and, to the extent possible, measurable impacts in customer attitude and response. Local child support agencies also may provide more detailed reporting to document program successes, less than successful approaches, and related corrective actions or adjustments as a way of communicating results and lessons learned.

4. Collect and Analyze Data

Each local child support agency shall collect, analyze, and use data resulting from implementation of its local Customer Service Plan in child support program services planning and operational decision-making. Data is collected, evaluated, and compared over time to measure changes in child support program performance and customer satisfaction. The data elements identified and collected by local child support agencies are reviewed, modified, and improved over time. Strategies to improve child support program service delivery are developed based on the data and related information.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has a local Customer Service Plan that identifies activities to be accomplished as well as corresponding measures of effectiveness.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency has a local Customer Service Plan that meets prescribed requirements, submits quarterly progress reports within 30-days after the close of a quarter (beginning with the first report by April 30, 2001 for the quarter ending March 31, 2001), and appropriately uses funds allocated for this purpose.

Authority:

- CSS Letter #00-07 dated November 7, 2000; related letters and information notices.

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CSS.1 SERVICE PLANNING

CSS.1.1 Determine Demographics and Customer Characteristics

- Demographic data is available from the County Planning Office; State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Section; and the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Satisfaction Baseline Survey.
- The Statewide Customer Service Satisfaction Baseline Survey contains useful customer demographic and characteristic data for the state and each county.
- The Department of Child Support Services Collectibility Study is producing findings that will likely influence the statewide approach to collection and management of child support obligations. A public process to consider this study together with other related research is scheduled for summer 2002.
- The Minnesota Child Support Enforcement Agency analyzed their customers and outline five primary categories of parents whom they serve: complying, uninformed, unable, reluctant, and evading. Minnesota defines these categories by levels of readiness, willingness, and ability to comply with child support obligations. Distinguishing between the categories permits systematic modification of the child support system's response to the parents based on their characteristics—an individualized Child Support Program response.

CSS.1.2 Establish Local Customer Service Advisory Body

CSS.1.3 Solicit Widespread Customer and Community Input

CSS.1.4 Consider Customer Service Satisfaction Information

CSS.1.5 Develop Local Customer Service Plan

- Best practices that may be included in local Customer Service Plans are identified under other functional elements within the Customer Service and Satisfaction performance category.

CSS.2 Accessibility to Services and Information

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies value full inclusion and access to the child support program by all persons receiving and eligible for services. California is a state of great diversity and each local child support agency must provide child support services that are accessible to these diverse populations. Effective facilitation of customer access to child support program services to meet individual customer needs includes ensuring language and physical accessibility; delivery of services in a culturally competent manner; provision of convenient office locations, hours of operation, and appropriate office ambiance; and self-directed access to information.

Access to child support program services has been addressed in several forums during the past two years. The Policies, Procedures and Practices (P3) Project included a Customer Access Workgroup that focused on studying and recommending actions for improved access to child support program services. In addition, the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Forum held in September 2000 provided significant input and guidance in this area. And, finally, the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Initiative begun in November 2000 identified “Access to child support program Services” as one of five program components that may be addressed in local Customer Service Plans. Together these prior work efforts guide the functional elements, tasks and standards contained in this functional area.

CSS.2.1 Provide Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides child support program services that are accessible to persons with limited English proficiency, i.e., cannot speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits them to interact effectively with the child support program. It is the further intent that steps will be taken to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency can meaningfully access child support program services and information.

Standard:

CSS.2.1 The local child support agency provides access to child support program services to persons with limited English proficiency in languages that meet their needs.

Tasks:

1. Assess Language Needs of Customers

Each local child support agency shall conduct an assessment of the language needs of its child support program customers and the community served. As part of service planning (refer to CSS.1 Service Planning), each local agency identifies the non-English languages that are likely to be encountered by the child support program, including the number of limited English proficiency persons that are currently receiving and/or eligible for services. This information provides the foundation for identifying what needs to be done to ensure accessibility to child support program service for persons with limited English proficiency.

2. Identify and Record Language Needs of Customers

Each local child support agency shall identify and record the language needs of each child support program customer with limited English proficiency in the member's case record. This information is available and used to permit appropriate communications with these customers.

3. Assess Language Skills of Staff

Each local child support agency shall conduct an assessment of the language skills of the agency including child support program staff, contractors, volunteers, or other available resources.

4. Identify Public Contact Positions

Each local child support agency shall identify and designate public contact positions where language assistance is likely to be needed within its agency, including local offices. A public contact position is one that emphasizes the ability to meet, contact, and deal with the public in the performance of the agency's functions. To assist in this effort, the Department of Child Support Services in collaboration with local child support agencies has designated specific functional areas that are likely to have public contact positions. These areas are case intake and initiation, Ombudsperson Program, local complaint resolution and state hearing processes, centralized telephone or call center operations, and responders to public contact telephone numbers. In addition, each

local agency shall assess their individual child support program operations to include additional public contact areas and positions, as appropriate.

5. Provide Appropriate Oral Language Access

Each local child support agency shall, based on its assessment, identify the resources, location, and availability of necessary resources to provide effective language assistance. Local child support agencies may meet the language needs of its customers through a range of oral language assistance options including hiring bilingual staff or interpreters, contracting for outside interpreter services, arranging for use of voluntary community interpreters, and using telephone language interpreter services. However, language assistance options must be of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of customers with limited English proficiency.

Therefore, the Department of Child Support Services has designated “threshold language” requirements for local child support agencies. Local child support agencies that meet a threshold language requirement must have oral language services available in designated public contact positions. Generally, this means that the local agency shall employ a sufficient number of qualified bi-lingual persons in public contact positions or as interpreters to assist those in such positions. Local child support agencies that do not meet the Department of Child Support Services designated threshold language requirements are required to obtain timely oral language assistance services whenever needed.

6. Provide Appropriate Written Language Access

Each local child support agency shall provide child support program written materials that are routinely provided in English to applicants, customers and the public in regularly encountered non-English languages. These written materials are referred to as “core Information” and defined as the basic repertoire of vital documents, forms and information that should be available to convey key child support program content. Core information includes, but is not limited to, applications; forms and letters containing important information regarding participation in the child support program; notices regarding case action; notices requiring a response from member; notices delineating customer rights, roles and responsibilities, including complaint resolution and state fair hearing processes; notices advising persons with limited English proficiency of the availability of free language assistance; and other relevant outreach materials.

The Department of Child Support Services will translate core information into threshold languages as defined in its regulations and determined necessary and cost effective to ensure meaningful access to services and information. However, local child support agencies should translate additional materials into non-English languages as deemed appropriate to effectively communicate with its customers. Local agency written translations shall be completed in accordance with translation competency requirements established by the Department of Child Support Services.

7. Provide Oral and Written Language Access for Persons with Disabilities

Each local child support agency shall provide child support program services and information for persons with hearing and/or sight impairments. Related tasks are described under CSS.2.4 Provide Access to Services for Persons with Physical Disabilities.

8. Implement Language Access Policies and Procedures

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement a comprehensive written language assistance program that includes policies and procedures for the above listed tasks, periodic training of staff, and monitoring of the program. In particular, local child support agencies shall ensure that all staff is knowledgeable about language assistance policies and procedures and how to implement them when needed.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has policies and procedures for meeting customer language needs.
- Local agency provides training on the use of bilingual staff or interpreters, including the core curriculum and training programs, and how bilingual staff and interpreters will be utilized.
- Local agency has available bilingual staff or interpreters for at least identified threshold languages in public contact positions.
- Local agency has timely links for customers who do not meet threshold language criteria to appropriate services and information.
- Local agency has written core information available in threshold languages.
- Local agency caseload composition (child support program utilization rates) reflects the primary languages spoken in the geographic area served.
- Levels of satisfaction with child support program services experienced by linguistically diverse customers are equivalent to that of all customers in general.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency meets the requirements of civil rights regulations by having in place written policies and procedures for identifying and assessing the language needs of its customers and applicants that are limited English proficiency.
- Local agency has procedures to timely obtain oral language assistance for all persons with limited English proficiency, regardless of threshold language designation.

Authority:

CSS.2.2 Provide for Written Material Readability

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides child support program written materials (forms, brochures and other information) meeting readability requirements, i.e., written materials that are clear, concise, understandable, and meet appropriate educational or literacy levels.

Standard:

CSS.2.2 The local child support agency enables access to child support program services and information by using written materials that meet the readability needs of its customers.

Tasks:

1. Determine Readability Needs of Customers

Each local child support agency shall assess its child support program customers and local communities to determine the readability needs including literacy levels of eligible populations. Effective communication in any language requires an understanding of the literacy levels of eligible populations. This assessment will provide valuable input to statewide readability requirements and/or identify the need for development of additional written materials targeted to specific local communities.

2. Review Forms, Brochures and Other Information for Readability

Each local child support agency shall participate in the statewide effort to review, revise, consolidate, and develop standard forms for the child support program. The Department of Child Support Services is initiating a process to review all forms currently used by the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies as well as by other entities that assist in administering and/or interface with the child support program. It is the intent of the Department of Child Support Services to centrally develop standard child support program forms and other written information beginning with “core information” needed to access and participate in the program. Review and standardization of other non-core information will follow. These materials must also meet the Department of Child Support Services established readability requirements developed under the Statewide Outreach Program.

3. Provide Written Materials Meeting Established Readability Requirements

Each local child support agency shall provide written information that meets statewide readability requirements in terms of clarity, understandability, educational and literacy level. Although most written information will be standardized statewide, local child support agencies may need to develop materials to meet the unique needs of local population, communities or programs. Local child support agencies developing non-core forms and materials shall meet state established readability requirements and seek other Department of Child Support Services approvals as necessary.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has assessed local customer and community readability needs and ensures the availability of appropriate written materials.

- Local agency makes available only standardized written materials used statewide and/or written materials that meet readability and the Department of Child Support Services approval requirements.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- Department of Child Support Services Statewide Outreach Program Concept Paper dated November 12, 2001.

CSS.2.3 Provide Culturally Competent Services

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides child support program services that are culturally competent. Culture is comprised of a group's learned patterns of behavior, values, norms, and practices, which can strongly influence the provision and response to services provided. The ability of each local agency and its staff to actively apply knowledge of culture and language when interacting with members from diverse backgrounds is a measure of cultural competency. Attainment of a high level of organizational cultural competency is an important aspect of providing accessible and responsive child support program services and information. The provision of culturally competent services ultimately leads to improved access and service results.

Standard:

CSS.2.3 The local child support agency provides culturally competent services that reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of its customers.

Tasks:

1. Assess Customer Cultural and Linguistic Needs

Each local child support agency shall use information gathered under CSS.1 Service Planning, as the basis upon which to determine the cultural and linguistic needs of its customers. Understanding the demographic composition of the population to be served is an important element in ensuring the child support program services are accessible and effective. Local child support agencies are expected to use state and local level data sources to determine county geographic, socio-economic, and demographic profiles.

2. Assess Organizational Cultural and Linguistic Competency

Each local child support agency shall assess the knowledge, skills and abilities of its staff and organization as a whole to provide services that meet the cultural and linguistic competency needs of its customers. An organizational assessment shall identify current levels of cultural and linguistic competence including overall policies and administrative direction, human resource composition and location, competency levels of staff, and customer assessments of services provided.

3. Develop a Cultural Competence Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement a Cultural Competence Plan consistent with Department of Child Support Services standards and requirements to achieve cultural competence. It is recognized that cultural competence is a goal toward which professionals, agencies and systems should strive. However, the Cultural Competence Plan is expected to illuminate the next steps in the process of becoming culturally competent including policies, procedures and practices; staff training; and methods and means to promote cultural competence.

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A culturally competent local agency is one that acknowledges and incorporates at all levels the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally-unique needs.

Performance Measures:

- The caseload composition (child support program utilization rates) of the local child support agency reflects the cultural, ethnic and language characteristics of the general population in the geographic area served.
- Levels of satisfaction with child support program services experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse customers are equivalent to that of all child support program customers in general.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.2.4 Provide Access to Services for Persons with Physical Disabilities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides access to child support services for persons with physical disabilities, including hearing loss and/or vision impairment. The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibition discrimination on the basis of disability, and require service accessibility.

Standard:

CSS.2.4 The local child support agency provides access to services for persons that have physical disabilities including hearing loss and/or vision impairment.

Task:

1. Provide Physically Accessible Services

Each local child support agency shall provide child support program services and information that are accessible to persons with disabilities. Access for persons with disabilities includes provision of language assistance such as sign language interpreters for persons who are hearing impaired or alternative formats such as Braille, large print, or tape for person who are vision impaired. Local child support agencies will assess child support program service accessibility for persons with disabilities and implement appropriate action to remedy findings.

Performance Measures:

- The caseload composition (child support program utilization rates) of the local child support agency reflects the characteristics of the general population in the geographic area served.
- Levels of satisfaction with child support program services experienced by customers with disabilities are equivalent to that of all child support program customers in general.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

CSS.2.5 Provide Access to Service Locations

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides services in a manner that facilitates customer accessibility in terms of office locations, hours of operation, and appropriate office ambiance.

Standard:

CSS.2.5 The local child support agency provides convenient and appropriate access to services to meet the needs of its client base.

Tasks:

1. Provide Convenient Office Locations

Each local child support agency shall determine and consider the geographic distribution of the population to be served in planning the delivery of child support services. Efforts will be made to provide child support program services in locations in close proximity to and/or are otherwise easily accessible to persons to be served. Services may be accessible as a result of close proximity to major employment areas, major public transportation routes, or other similar factors. In addition, local child support agencies shall consider the use of non-traditional locations and/or means to provide customer access, including through community-based organizations, co-location with other public service entities, or other means intended to make services convenient to customers.

2. Provide Appropriate Hours of Operation

Each local child support agency has office hours meeting the Department of Child Support Services required core hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., including lunchtime, Monday through Friday. Based on assessed local needs, some local child support agencies may offer extended office hours of operation that may include early mornings, late evenings, and/or Saturdays.

3. Provide Customer Friendly Office Ambiance

Each local child support agency shall provide services in an office environment appropriate to convey a professional, but family and child friendly image. Offices shall be appropriately furnished and decorated, and free of pictures, posters, materials and/or images that convey a less than neutral environment for both parents. Offices shall also display information in appropriate languages necessary to ensure accessibility to child support program services.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has assessed the appropriate location of offices and attempts to ensure that child support program services are conveniently located.

- Local agency maintains office hours consistent with the Department of Child Support Services requirements.

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- Local agency maintains an office ambiance that is customer friendly and free from bias.

Compliance Measures:

- Required core office hours maintained.

Authority:

CSS.2.6 Provide Self Directed Access to Information

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency provides convenient customer self-directed access to information.

Standard:

CSS.2.6 The local child support agency provides customers with professional and easy to use self-directed access to child support program information.

Task:

1. Provide Appropriate Means for Customer Self Assisted Access to Information

Each local child support agency will to the extent possible make available customer self assisted access to general and case specific information. Various self-assisted means available to access information may include a Voice Response Unit, touch screen computer assistance, websites, Internet, or other means. Voice response units may provide “trees” for general information as well as case-specific information, the later requiring programming to access payment information at a minimum.

Local child support agencies shall give consideration to the potential Information Technology (IT) implications of applications of this type. For example, implementing a voice response unit system may require interface related information technology costs for its implementation. Also, Internet access to case information similarly has automated system impacts. IT impacts may require the entire standard IT funding considerations and approvals.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency provides customer self-directed access to information within the confines of current automated systems and approved information technology.

Compliance Measures:

- The Department of Child Support Services proposed customer service regulations likely will provide specific requirements in this area including specifications for required websites that provide general information and links to other websites; access to standard forms, brochures, child support program Handbook, and other information; access to complaint and state hearing processes; email access; and easy to use customer satisfaction feedback screens. In other areas, the P3 Project Customer Access Workgroup recommended operating specification for voice response unit accessed general and case specific information, and Internet access to customer information and on-line forms of 24/7.

Authority:

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CSS.2 ACCESSIBILITY TO SERVICES AND INFORMATION

CSS.2.1 Provide Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

CSS.2.2 Provide for Written Material Readability

CSS.2.3 Provide Culturally Competent Services

CSS.2.4 Provide Access to Services for Persons with Physical Disabilities

CSS.2.5 Provide Access to Service Locations

- Provide access to services through personal and telephone contact in on-traditional environments or extended hours of service.

CSS.2.6 Provide Self Directed Access to Information

- Explore interactive web-based applications to permit Child Support Program customers to provide updated information such as change of address, change of employer, or other.

CSS.3 Outreach to Customers and Communities

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services is working in partnership with local child support agencies to proactively communicate with customers and the general public about the services and important role of California's child support program in the lives of children and families. Customers include those individuals or families receiving, directly impacted by, seeking, and/or eligible for child support program services. The general public includes all those who may at some time form or may have already formed impressions about the value of this government provided service. These audiences have different information needs and conveying to each the right information at the right time is the challenge addressed by this functional element.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies share the belief that a professional, comprehensive, and effective Statewide Outreach Program is an essential element in achieving the overall mission of the child support program, which is:

...to promote the well being of children and the self-sufficiency of families by delivering first-rate child support services and collection activities that contribute to meeting the financial, medical, and emotional needs of children.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies support this mission by effectively delivering information to customers and all interested parties, educating the public on available child support services, promoting access to the program by qualified families, and expanding public awareness of and attention to the needs of children. To achieve these goals and bring about fundamental cultural changes in perceptions about the child support program requires reaching out and communicating with individuals and groups through use of specially focused materials and approaches that recognize the unique needs of diverse target audiences.

The shared vision for the Statewide Child Support Outreach Program is contained in the Department of Child Support Services Outreach Program Concept Paper dated November 2001. Since that time, the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies have established a governance and organizational structure and begun to implement the outlined approach. Each local child support agency contributes significantly to the overall success of the Statewide Outreach Program by working within the agreed upon framework to focus on the information and service needs of their own customers and local communities. It is within this context that the Outreach to Customers and Communities functional area is illuminated.

In addition, Public Outreach is one of the five components of local Customer Service Plans addressed and funded under the Customer Service Initiative begun in November 2000. And, finally, customer and community outreach funding was further augmented through the state fiscal year 2001-02 allocation process in recognition of the increasing

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need to enhance communications with customers and local communities. Additional contextual information is found in the referenced California Department of Child Support Services Outreach Program Concept Paper dated November 11, 2001 and the other materials.

CSS.3.1 Establish a Local Outreach Program Function

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has in place an Outreach Program function in accordance with the requirements and expectations established under the Statewide Child Support Outreach Program.

Standard:

CSS.3.1 The local child support agency has in place an outreach program function necessary to design, implement, operate and maintain an effective local Outreach Program.

Tasks:

1. Designate an Outreach Coordinator

Each local child support agency is required to designate an Outreach Coordinator responsible to communicate and establish appropriate internal processes and procedures necessary to ensure that activities identified under the Statewide Outreach Program and related strategic plans are carried out at the local level. In addition, the Outreach Coordinator communicates and coordinates with the Department of Child Support Services on the Outreach Program and related outreach activities, and participates and assists as requested by the Department of Child Support Services in developing the overall Statewide Outreach Program. Quarterly meetings of all local child support agency Outreach Coordinators are anticipated to coordinate Outreach Program activities; share ideas, information, innovations, technology and tools; share issues of common concern; and participate in training.

2. Establish Organizational Structure

Each local child support agency is required to establish an organizational structure that constitutes their Outreach Program operation. The Outreach Program operation should have a clearly defined mission, roles, responsibilities, authority, and resources necessary to carry out an effective program. There should be a sufficient number of staff that has the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to design, implement, and maintain the Outreach Program.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has an Outreach Coordinator that has the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to carry out an effective local Outreach Program.
- Local agency has an organizational structure and resources necessary to carry out an effective local Outreach Program.

Compliance Measures:

- Outreach Coordinator designated.

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Authority:

- Department of Child Support Services Outreach Program Concept Paper dated November 12, 2001.

CSS.3.2 Identify and Assess Target Audiences

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local Outreach Program develops outreach plans, materials and approaches based on complete and thorough identification and assessment of target audiences, their needs, and communication medium preferences.

Standard:

CC.3.2 The local child support agency identifies and assesses target audiences and their communication needs and preferences in development of their Outreach Program.

Tasks:

1. Identify and Assess Target Audiences

Each local child support agency is required to engage in a process to identify target audiences (groups and individuals) that interact with the child support program and with whom it is necessary to effectively communicate. This includes determining the purposes for which the child support program must communicate with each audience, as well as the appropriate or preferred mediums for these communications.

The process of “stakeholder analysis” requires direct dialogue with each identified target audience to determine participation and/or information needs, and identify existing communication structures and approaches that can be leveraged. Use of focus groups or other alternative approaches are necessary to yield this information. It is expected that stakeholder expectations for participation and communication using agreed upon structures, methods, media, and frequencies will be maintained through assignment of a lead person or point of contact with the local agency.

2. Assess and Incorporate Supplemental Customer and Public Input

Each local child support agency shall consider supplemental input from customers and the general public received from other sources including customer satisfaction surveys, public inquiry and response data, complaint resolution and state hearings data, and local news media reports. These sources of input further illuminate the needs of customers and the general public and should be used to inform the development of outreach materials and approaches.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has a process to identify target audiences and assess their individual communication needs and preferences.
- Local agency has in place mechanisms to capture relevant supplemental customer and public input to inform its Outreach Program efforts.

Compliance Measures:

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Authority:

- Department of Child Support Services Outreach Program Concept Paper dated November 12, 2001.

CSS.3.3 Develop and Maintain an Outreach Program

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has in place an effective Outreach Program to reach diverse customers and local communities. Moreover, the Outreach Program should inform and enable customers to properly use child support program services, and inform local communities about the needs of children and families as well as the importance of the child support program to the self-sufficiency of families.

Standard:

CSS.3.3 The local child support agency has in place an Outreach Program that effectively communicates and reaches out to its customers and local communities.

Tasks:

1. Develop Outreach Program Plan

Each local child support agency is required to develop a local Outreach Program that is responsive to identified target audiences and their assessed information and communication needs and preferences. Local Outreach Programs operate within the Statewide Outreach Program framework to address target audience needs statewide as well as the needs of local customers and local communities. Local Outreach Programs also should communicate recent, ongoing and upcoming change to the child support program, including program restructuring initiatives, automation and transition to a single statewide system, and others.

2. Provide Appropriate Outreach Materials and Approaches

Each local child support agency is required to provide appropriate outreach materials and approaches to communicate with local target audiences based on identified communication needs and preferred means and mediums. Outreach materials include those that are state developed for distribution to all customers as well as locally developed to meet local needs. State developed materials include complaint resolution brochures, customer rights and responsibilities brochures, and others. Locally developed materials are created to meet unique population, program, and/or community specific needs and are approved by the Department of Child Support Services.

3. Evaluate Quality and Effectiveness

Each local child support agency is required to continually evaluate existing outreach materials and approaches to assure quality and effectiveness. Representatives of intended target audiences should be involved in evaluating existing and newly developed materials, as well as evaluating effectiveness of the approach. Outreach materials shall be provided in languages necessary to meet the communication needs of intended audiences.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has an Outreach Program based on sound identification and assessment of target audiences and their individual needs.

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- Local agency target audiences participate in planning, designing, executing, and evaluating the Outreach Program, including materials and approaches.
- Local agency participates and supports statewide outreach strategies and campaigns including Child Support Awareness Month, Major League Dad Campaign, and the Responsible Fatherhood Campaign.
- Local agency outreach materials demonstrate clarity of message and meet readability guidelines and language accessibility requirements.
- Local agency demonstrates increased communications with customers and the general public through mailings, public forums, or other means to ensure they are kept well informed about the child support program.
- There is evidence that customers receive information to enable them to properly use child support program services.
- There is evidence that local communities are better informed about the needs of children and families and the importance of the child support program to the self-sufficiency of families.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency uses state developed and/or approved local outreach materials.
- Local agency participates in statewide outreach campaigns and activities as required under the Statewide Outreach Program.

Authority:

- Department of Child Support Services Outreach Program Concept Paper dated November 12, 2001.

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CSS.3 OUTREACH TO CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES

CSS.3.1 Establish a Local Outreach Program Function

CSS.3.2 Identify and Assess Target Audiences

- Develop relationships with local government agencies, business and employer groups such as the local Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Clubs, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and the school system.

CSS.3.3 Develop and Maintain an Outreach Program

- Inventory and assess best practices used by the child support program within California, other states, and by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement.
- Reach out to other public and private services entities and businesses to identify best practices and innovations in the field of communications and outreach to customers and the public.
- Effective use of outreach techniques including appropriate educational materials, workshops and information exchange forums, and general media relations.

CSS.4 Customer Focused Business Processes and Services

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize that customer service is a fundamental and integral part of the child support program that cannot be considered separately and apart from core business process functions. Although the initial focus through the Customer Service Initiative was to bring this central element of the program to the forefront, it is necessary to take this to the next level by ensuring that excellence in customer service permeates every aspect of the child support program. Sound fundamental business practices must be in place in order to achieve the intended child support program results; there is no substitute for efficient, effective business practices. However, excellence in customer service also requires considering all core business processes and services as customer service opportunities. California's child support program is committed to seeking a way in which to positively effect those persons who receive services and/or interface in any way with California's child support program.

In addition, the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies value the voluntary participation of both parents, to the extent possible and appropriate, in the child support program. Efforts to encourage and support the participation of both parents are important and require assessment of business practices to ensure equity, fairness, and respectful treatment of all parties involved. This value is based on the belief that the voluntary participation of both parents is more likely to result in support for children.

Services to encourage program participation as well as training are two of the five components addressed through local Customer Service Plans pursuant to the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Initiative.

CSS.4.1 Assess Business Processes for Customer Service Opportunities

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency routinely assesses business processes and services for customer service opportunities. The manner in which services are provided significantly impacts the perceptions and opinions of those receiving services. Oftentimes the treatment received by customers outweighs the value of service received.

Standard:

CSS.4.1 The local child support agency routinely assesses its fundamental business processes and practices to ensure that services are provided in a customer friendly and responsive manner.

Task:

1. Assess Business Processes

Each local child support agency will assess business processes to identify customer interfaces and opportunities to improve customer service. Local child support agencies shall consider business processes from a customer's frame of reference, looking for points of contact, and customer friendly improvements. Implementation of new policies and procedures and/or other business process re-engineering will incorporate consideration of the impacts on customers.

Performance Measures:

- There is evidence that local child support agencies continually assess business process to identify opportunities to improve customer service.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.4.2 Encourage Customer Service Practices by Other Entities Involved in Child Support Program Administration

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has in place effective customer service linkages with local child support agencies and entities directly involved in administration of the child support program, e.g., the Title IV-A Program and the courts. These two entities directly assist in administering the child support program and the manner in which they deliver services can most immediately influence and impact overall success. Therefore, it is critical that these two entities in particular share the core values of the child support program and work in an integrated and consistent manner to delivering effective customer service.

Standard:

CSS.4.2 The local child support agency encourages other entities directly involved in administration of the child support program, e.g., IV-A Program and Courts, to provide services in a manner that is responsive to child support program customer needs.

Tasks:

1. Establish and Maintain Effective Title IV-A Program Interfaces

Each local child support agency shall work with the Title IV-A Program to provide effective customer responsive services to child support program recipients and former recipients. This may include co-location of offices to ensure timely and efficient child support program case intake, efficient sharing of necessary information, and accurate and timely disposition of aid payment history information.

2. Establish and Maintain Effective Court Interfaces

Each local child support agency shall assist in making the court process as accessible, understandable, and comfortable as possible for child support program participants. This may include consideration of hearing schedules that permit more convenient court appearances (e.g., split calendars starting throughout the day, night court, or other alternatives), easy to understand written materials, easily available assistance to understand court process, efforts to standardize child support program court rules and practices, and advocacy for customer service values.

Each local child support agency will work to enhance relationships with court commissioners and facilitators to ensure effective delivery of child support program services. Working with the courts is one of five components of local Customer Service Plans under the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Initiative begun in November 2000.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has effective customer service interfaces with the local Title IV-A agency and the courts.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.4.3 Encourage the Participation of Parents

The intent of this functional element is to encourage the voluntary participation of both parents, to the extent possible and appropriate, in the child support program. Effectively involving both parents requires assessing business processes to ensure that they are free from bias and other factors that may discourage participation.

Standard:

CSS.4.3 The local child support agency encourages the participation of both parents in the child support program.

Tasks:

1. Assess Business Processes Discouraging Parental Participation

Each local child support agency shall assess business process to identify barriers to the participation of both parents in the child support program. At the same time, local child support agencies shall identify changes in business process that may encourage participation. Areas of focus will include elimination of biased or negative terminology from daily operations and written materials.

In addition, research has found that “Satisfied customers lead to increased compliance; improved information exchange; improved relationships; increased trust; and, potentially, decreased workloads or costs.” (Office of Child Support Enforcement, Delivering Effective Customer Service, October 31, 2001).

Services to encourage program participation are one of five components of local Customer Service Plans under the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Initiative begun in November 2000.

2. Establish Effective Linkages with Other Organizations

Each local child support agency shall establish appropriate linkages with other public and private service entities and community-based organizations. Effective community linkages provide an important way in which to reach out to child support program customers and the general public. In addition, community organizations may provide services (i.e., employment, education, legal, parenting, health, substance abuse, and others) that are important in encouraging and/or enabling the participation of both parents in the child support program.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency continually assesses business processes and practices to identify barriers to voluntary participation in the child support program as well as motivators to encourage participation.
- Local agency has in place two-way linkages with public and private service organizations, community and faith-based groups to permit referral to needed services and/or encourage parental participation in the child support program.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.4.4 Promote Customer Oriented Organizational Culture

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that local child support agency staff are appropriately trained and coached in providing outstanding customer service to child support program clients. An organizational culture that promotes, encourages, and enables staff to be responsive to customers in meeting their needs are commonly found to provide the best customer service.

Standard:

CSS.4.4 The local child support agency provides training and encourages an organizational culture that values and promotes excellent customer service.

Tasks:

1. Promote an Organizational Culture that Values Excellent Customer Service

Each local child support agency shall seek to establish a strong customer service organizational culture, including customer-focused vision, values, and mission as well as operating philosophy. Research shows that an organizational culture that promotes customer services and enables staff to respond and resolve customer issues results in increased customer and employee satisfaction. The local agency leadership team promotes internal processes that support the customer-focused vision.

2. Recruit and Recognize Employees for Customer Service

Each local child support agency shall focus on recruiting employees who support the customer service vision, and recognizing employees that demonstrate a strong customer service orientation. Research has shown that "...capable workers who are well trained and fairly compensated provide better service, need less supervision, and are much more likely to stay on the job. As a result, their customers are likely to be more satisfied..." "...employee turnover and customer satisfaction are directly correlated" (Harvard Business Review). Local child support agencies will consider programs and ways in which to recognize employees for good customer service.

In addition, the local agency leadership team plays a key role in defining boundaries for staff, supporting staff efforts to satisfy the customer, and otherwise promoting customer service.

3. Provide Customer Service Training

Each local child support agency shall provide training and development, consistent with the Department of Child Support Services Statewide Training Program, in customer service values, principles, and techniques. The training should be regular, consistent and delivered by experts to ensure that local child support agency staff has the necessary tools and information to provide quality customer service. All local agency staff should participate in customer service training.

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Training is one of five components of local Customer Service Plans under the Department of Child Support Services Customer Service Initiative begun in November 2000.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency demonstrates a commitment to customer service and provides staff with necessary training, support, and encouragement.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency meets customer service training requirements under the Statewide Child Support Training Program.

Authority:

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CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SATISFACTION
CSS.4 CUSTOMER FOCUSED BUSINESS PROCESSES AND SERVICES

CSS.4.1 Assess Business Processes for Customer Service Opportunities

- The Department of Child Support Services is considering the feasibility of using the California Child Support Automation System Business Integration Framework materials developed in planning the single statewide automation system as a means to identify child support program business process customer service contact points.

CSS.4.2 Encourage Customer Service Practices by Other Entities Involved in child support program Administration

CSS.4.3 Encourage the Participation of Parents

- Local efforts to encourage participation in the child support program often include ensuring that support orders accurately reflect the current circumstances of the obligor; and, when appropriate, efforts to facilitate modification of support orders.

CSS.4.4 Promote Customer Oriented Organizational Culture

CSS.5 Customer Inquiry and Complaint Response

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to providing customers with timely and easy access to consistent, accurate, current, and complete information about the child support program and their individual case(s). To this end, numerous varied ways through which customers may access child support program information have been established. It is believed that effective information exchange and responsiveness to customer inquiries are fundamental business processes that strongly influence customer satisfaction and outcomes. Thus, the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies share the commitment to effectively respond to customer inquiries and requests.

In addition, the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies believe that customer inquiries and disputes provide the opportunity to “wow” the customer. Further, it is believed that inquiries and disputes should be handled at the lowest level possible. An effective customer inquiry, complaint resolution and state hearing process is key to customer satisfaction.

CSS.5.1 Provide Ombudsperson Program

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has an Ombudsperson Program. The Ombudsperson assists customers in navigating the child support program, including the complaint resolution and state hearing processes.

Standard:

CSS.5.1 The local child support agency has an Ombudsperson Program that effectively assists customers with inquiries and helps navigate customers through the complaint resolution process and state hearing process when necessary.

Tasks:

1. Provide Ombudsperson Program

Each local child support agency shall establish and operate an Ombudsperson Program to assist customers in navigating the child support program and facilitating responses to inquiries and complaints. Each Ombudsperson Program shall have a designated lead Ombudsperson who provides a single point of contact for customers needing assistance. The Ombudsperson Program is considered an additional service that complements and supports all other administrative and legal procedures and remedies available to child support program customers. The Ombudsperson Program ensures adherence to policies providing mechanisms for customers to express and access local complaint resolution and state hearing processes. The goal of the Ombudsperson Program is to proactively assist customers in resolving inquiries and issues or navigating the local complaint resolution or state hearing processes.

2. Collect Utilization and Performance Data

Each local child support agency shall collect and analyze Ombudsperson Program utilization and performance data and use this information in child support program service planning and operational decision-making. Data elements collected include, but are not limited to, number of contacts, number of contacts by type, number of referrals made, and outcomes. The Ombudsperson is responsible for analyzing the data required and reporting system issues to Department of Child Support Services.

3. Submit Performance Data and Reports

Each local child support agency as part of the Department of Child Support Services quarterly report related to local Customer Service Plans submits information on the performance of the Ombudsperson Program.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency operates an effective Ombudsperson Program.
- There is evidence that the local child support agency collects, analyzes and incorporates Ombudsperson Program utilization and performance data into child support program service decision-making.

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Compliance Measures:

- Local agency operates an Ombudsperson Program in accordance with prescribed rules and regulations that include designation of a lead Ombudsperson, sufficient staffing, appropriate organizational authority and reporting relationship, collection of utilization and performance data, and outreach to inform customers of the availability of this service.

- Local agency analyzes complaint data.

Authority:

- Department of Child Support Services CSS Letter #00-07 dated November 7, 2000

- California Code of Regulations, Section 111540 et seq.

CSS.5.2 Respond to Customer Inquiries and Requests

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has in place procedures and protocols to timely, accurately, and completely respond to customer inquiries and disputes in a professional manner. Customer inquiries may be initiated via telephone, call center, voice mail, letters, email, fax, or in-person walk-in contacts.

Standard:

CSS.5.2 The local child support agency has in place procedures and protocols to effectively respond to customer inquiries that may be received from varied sources.

Tasks:

1. Provide Telephone Response Protocols

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement procedures and protocols for responding timely, accurately, and completely to customer telephone inquiries. Telephone inquiries include access to child support staff through direct line or from referral by call center staff. All telephone system routing, messaging, and voice mail should be customer friendly and permit easy access.

2. Provide Professional Call Center Operations

Each local child support agency that operates (directly with child support program staff and/or under contract) shall adhere to standards of practice and professionalism in the operation of call centers. Call centers are broadly defined here to include any diversion or routing of telephone calls to a central location for answering by staff that are primarily dedicated or charged with this function. Call center operations are intended to allow for specialized training of staff and diversion of calls from line caseworkers.

3. Provide Written Response Protocols

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement procedures and protocols for responding timely, accurately, and completely to customer written inquiries, including letters, email, and faxes.

4. Provide Access to a Caseworker During Core Business Hours

Each local child support agency shall provide access to face-to-face contact with a child support caseworker at least during normal business hours. Access to a caseworker may be provided through a combination of walk-in and appointment hours. Local child support agencies will attempt to immediately resolve inquiries when a custodial party or non-custodial parent is on-site and, to the extent possible, not require a return appointment at a future date.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has telephone response protocols in place that include maximum number of rings before call is answered, percent of customer calls abandoned, and other relevant data.

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- Local agency has telephone system routing, messaging, and voice mail that is customer friendly and permits easy access.
- Local agency has written response protocols in place that meet timeliness, readability, accuracy, and tone requirements.
- Local agency provides access to face-to-face contact with a caseworker at least during normal business hours to permit response to persons that arrive on-site without an appointment.

Compliance Measures:

- The Department of Child Support Services is currently studying best practices in the operation of call centers to determine short, intermediate and long-term recommendations. The focus is on developing statewide uniformity and consistency in the operation of child support program call centers. It is likely that call center operational requirements will be specified in the future. In addition, it should be noted that call centers generally require telephone infrastructure and equipment upgrades that have IT implications and may be subject to IT requirements and approvals.
- The timeframe for response to voice and written inquiries from custodial parents or non-custodial parents concerning a child support case is three business days after receiving the contact. Whenever responses exceed this timeframe, the local agency must mail the inquirer a Request for Complaint Resolution form and related information no later than five business days from the date of the inquiry.
- The P3 Project Customer Access Workgroup recommended a required response timeframe of within two business days of initial contact for telephone inquiries, and 21 workdays for written correspondence. In addition, the workgroup recommended operating specifications for voice mail, incoming email, and faxes of 24/7.

Authority:

- Department of Child Support Services CSS Letter #01-20 dated July 25, 2001.

CSS.5.3 Provide Complaint Resolution Process

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency maintains a complaint resolution process that is responsive to custodial parents and/or non-custodial parents. The Family Code and Department of Child Support Services regulations require that local child support agencies implement a complaint resolution process with specific timeframes for resolving complaints regarding an unresolved dispute.

Standard:

CSS.5.3 The local child support agency maintains a local complaint resolution process.

Tasks:

1. Resolve Disputes as Lowest Level Possible

Each local child support agency has procedures and practices to resolve disputes before they become complaints subject to the formal complaint resolution process. The local agency responds to any dispute from a custodial party or non-custodial parent concerning a child support case within three business days after receiving the contact.

2. Provide Local Complaint Resolution Process

Each local child support agency operates a local complaint resolution process to respond to unresolved oral or written disputes from custodial parents and/or non-custodial parents, requiring investigation and written response within 30 calendar days.

3. Collect and Analyze Dispute and Complaint Resolution Data

Each local child support agency shall maintain and track informal dispute and local complaint resolution data, and use this information in planning child support program services and modifying operating practices. Complaint resolution data shall include, but not be limited to, the number and type of complaints received, complaints resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, elapsed time to resolve complaints, and number and percent of complaints in which the decision exceeds 30 calendar days.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has in place effective local informal dispute and formal local complaint resolution processes.
- Local agency records total number of complaints filed by type, length of time to resolve complaints, and customer satisfaction with the response.
- The complaint resolution process is the complaint mechanism of choice for child support program customers as evidenced by a reduction in the number of complaints forwarded through intermediaries such as elected officials, government officials, or others.

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Compliance Measures:

- Local agency acknowledges and resolves complaints within required timeframes.
- Local agency complies with complaints transfer requirements.

Authority:

- Department of Child Support Services Letter #01-20 dated July 25, 2001 addressing Customer Inquiry Response.
- California Code of Regulations, Section 110148 et seq.
- California Code of Regulations, Section 120100 et seq.

CSS.5.4 Provide Access to the State Hearing Process

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and maintains mechanisms for customers to access and participate in the state hearing process.

Standard:

CSS.5.4 The local child support agency has in place a system for enabling customers to access and participate in a state hearing.

Tasks:

1. Provide Access to the State Hearing Process

Each local child support agency must provide customers information on how to access the state hearing process when the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of the local complaint resolution process. Although the goal is to achieve resolution of disputes and complaints at the lowest level possible, each local agency shall ensure that complainants are aware of their right to request a state hearing. Local child support agencies shall inform complainants of the state hearing process verbally and with written state materials including fact sheets, brochures and posters.

2. Participate in State Hearings

Each local child support agency shall prepare information and participate in state hearings as required.

3. Implement State Hearing Decisions

Each local child support agency shall take appropriate action to implement state hearing decisions. The Department of Child Support Services will determine whether the local child support agency has implemented the state hearing decision as required.

4. Collect and Analyze State Hearing Decision Data

Each local child support agency shall evaluate state hearing decision data to determine where additional training, changes in policies or procedures, or other actions may be required to ensure effective delivery of services.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency provides timely description position statement to help ensure that the state hearing is productive.
- Local agency has in place processes and procedures for implementing state hearing decisions.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency participates in state hearing process.
- Local agency provides timely and complete written position statements.

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Authority:

- California Code of Regulations, Section 120200 et seq.

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CSS.5 CUSTOMER INQUIRY AND COMPLAINT RESPONSE

CSS.5.1 Provide Ombudsperson Program

CSS.5.2 Respond to Customer Inquiries and Requests

- Extended call center hours allow greater flexibility for interaction with the child support program at times convenient to the customer.

CSS.5.3 Provide Complaint Resolution Process

- Establish a case study team to examine complaints and identify process improvements to the complaint resolution process.

CSS.5.4 Provide Access to the State Hearing Process

CSS.6 Customer Satisfaction

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize that customer satisfaction with the service provided is a fundamental and integral part of the child support program. The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies value customer participation and opinion in service planning, design, and operation. The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies share the commitment to actively solicit participation, input, and feedback from customer and others that interface with the child support program. In seeking ways in which to positively effect those persons who receive services and/or interface in any way with California's child support program, the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies intend to employ a variety of approaches to secure customer satisfaction feedback.

CSS.6.1 Solicit Customer Satisfaction Information

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and maintains routine means through which to solicit the level of customer satisfaction with service provided by the child support program. The means through which to solicit customer satisfaction levels should permit opportunity for widespread input from diverse customers.

Standard:

CSS.6.1 The local child support agency uses varied methods through which to routinely solicit customer satisfaction with child support program services.

Tasks:

1. Conduct Periodic Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Each local child support agency shall periodically conduct customer satisfaction surveys. The Department of Child Support Services recently completed a Statewide Customer Satisfaction Baseline Survey that provides information statewide as well as for each county. Additional surveys will be conducted periodically to track progress over time. Local child support agencies may rely on this survey data and/or supplement the information with local customer satisfaction surveys.

2. Provide Varied Ways to Solicit Customer Satisfaction Input

Each local child support agency shall establish a variety of ways through which to routinely solicit customer satisfaction with child support program services. Each local Customer Service Advisory Body shall assist in soliciting customer satisfaction and input. In addition, customer satisfaction data also may be collected through outreach meetings and forums, periodic surveys, telephone sampling of recent customers, written solicitations, point of contact feedback, inquiries, complaint resolution and state hearing processes, and other means.

3. Use Customer Satisfaction Data for Service Planning

Each local child support agency uses information collected to assess customer satisfaction as part of its continuous quality improvement and service planning efforts. The information solicited to determine levels of customer satisfaction illuminates the understanding of customer needs, expectations, and preferences—an invaluable aspect of service planning, design, and delivery.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has in place varied methods to routinely solicit customer satisfaction data and incorporates this information into service planning, design, and operations.
- Local agency assesses customer satisfaction by establishing measures of satisfaction with service planning and responsiveness to local population and community characteristics; accessibility (self-directed and personal contacts);

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appropriately tailored outreach services and community integration; business processes and services; and customer inquiry and complaint response.

- Local agency conducts trend analysis of customer satisfaction data and demonstrates improvement from baseline data.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.6.2 Solicit Employee Job Satisfaction

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and maintains routine means through which to solicit employee job satisfaction levels. The level of employee job satisfaction has been directly linked to customer satisfaction; organizations with high employee satisfaction have higher customer satisfaction ratings.

Standard:

CSS.6.2 The local child support agency routinely assesses employee job satisfaction levels.

Task:

1. Solicit Employee Job Satisfaction Levels

Each local child support agency shall regularly measure employee job satisfaction levels and correlate, as appropriate, these findings with customer satisfaction information. Employee job satisfaction may be solicited through various means including periodic meetings, surveys, suggestion boxes, and employment exit interviews.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has in place varied methods to regularly solicit employee job satisfaction levels and incorporates the findings into organizational development strategies.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.6.3 Solicit Input from Entities that Interface with the Program

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency routinely solicits input from individuals and entities that interface with the child support program to determine their level of satisfaction with the interaction.

Standard:

CSS.6.3 The local child support agency routinely solicits input from entities that interface with the child support program to determine satisfaction with the interaction.

Task:

1. Solicit Interface Entity Input

Each local child support agency shall establish a variety of ways through which to routinely solicit input from individuals and entities that interface with the child support program to determine their level of satisfaction with the interaction. Entities that interface with the child support program include the Title IV-A Program, courts, and those that exchange data or otherwise directly interface with the child support program including employers, financial institutions, and others. It is important that these entities value and cooperatively interface with the child support program to ensure effective service delivery.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has in place a process to routinely solicit input from individuals and entities that interface with the child support program.
- Local agency conducts trend analysis of interface entity input and demonstrates improvement from baseline data.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

CSS.6.4 Assess Public Perceptions About the Program

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency periodically assesses the public perception of the child support program and its role in ensuring the self-sufficiency of families.

Standard:

CSS.6.4 The local child support agency periodically assesses local community perceptions of the child support program.

Task:

1. Assess Local Community Perception

Each local child support agency shall periodically assess the perceptions of the local community about the child support program and its role in the self-sufficiency of families. The assessment may be directly approached through household survey and/or by proxy such as articles published in local newspapers, minutes of Board of Supervisor meetings, public testimony at various forums, etcetera.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has in place methods to periodically assess local public opinion about the child support program.

- Local agency conducts trend analysis of local public opinion and demonstrates improvement from baseline data.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

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CSS.6 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

CSS.6.1 Solicit Customer Satisfaction Information

CSS.6.2 Solicit Employee Job Satisfaction

CSS.6.3 Solicit Input from Entities that Interface with the Program

CSS.6.4 Assess Public Perceptions About the Program

CHAPTER 7 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

This chapter addresses Administrative Services that are necessary to support performance of the child support program business process and services. Administrative Services are those general support functions that must be performed regardless of the type of services provided by an organization. The Administrative Services performance area has six functional areas: Automation, Financial Operations, Contracting, Human Resources, Training, and Physical Environment.

The Administrative Services performance area is not directly involved in serving child support customers through case management activities, working with the courts, or interfacing with employers and other agencies. However, the effectiveness of the administrative service functions in supporting the structure, staff, and operations performing child support business processes is critically important. Failure to provide sound administrative support to the business process will hinder the ability of the organization to succeed in achieving its mission and performance objectives.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognized early the importance of these administrative functions, focusing significant efforts on building the necessary infrastructure. For example, effectively using existing automation and planning for a single statewide automation system has been and will continue to be a significant priority. In addition, developing and implementing a local budget planning and allocation methodology to ensure fair and equitable allocation of available resources was put in place beginning in SFY 2001-02. And, the Statewide Training Program was designed and implementation begun during SFY 2000-01. It is the belief of DCSS and local agencies that administrative service functions are integral and critical to the success of the child support program.

AS.1 Automation

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize and value the important role that automation plays in the child support program. Automation enables child support program staff to perform multiple, high volume, and complex tasks necessary for effective customer service. At the same time, automation enables efficient performance of the more routine and common office tasks. The effective and efficient use of assigned consortia automation systems and office automation, including automation that improves customer service and response, are vital to achieving the child support program mission and performance goals.

In addition, the Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize that while the current automation environment is challenging, there are interim as well as longer term opportunities to enhance performance. In the near term there are opportunities to optimize use of current interim automation systems to increase uniformity and improve outcomes on key performance measures. At the same time, careful planning, development, and implementation of the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS) will bring additional program benefits, including increased uniformity, worker effectiveness, and enhanced customer service. The Department and local agencies are committed to optimizing current automation and actively collaborating in development of CCSAS to best meet the needs of California's child support program and its customers.

AS.1.1 Manage Local Consortia Systems (Consortia Lead Agencies)

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each of the six consortia systems lead agencies have in place a governance and operating structure necessary to effectively, efficiently and, timely carry out assigned responsibilities. The current interim consortia systems and lead agencies are: ARS (Los Angeles), BEST (Alameda), CASES (San Francisco), CHASER (San Mateo), KIDZ (Kern), and StarKids (Riverside). The governance and operating structures must support participation of consortia members, effective planning and priority setting, and execution of administrative and operating responsibilities.

Standard:

AS.1.1 The consortia lead agency has governance and operating structures to carry out its responsibilities for effectively administering the interim automation system.

Tasks:

1. Execute DCSS/Lead Agency Operating Agreement

DCSS will enter into an Operating Agreement with each consortia lead agency that defines roles and responsibilities, methods for communication, reporting requirements, and other necessary provisions. The Operating Agreement will be incorporated as an addendum to the POC between DCSS and the lead agency.

2. Participate in DCSS Governance and Operating Structure

Each consortia lead shall participate in the state level governance and operating structure, including the PRISM Advisory Group (PAG), Requirements Analysis Workgroup (RAW), and other groups or efforts as may be established. It is through this governance structure that statewide priority setting will occur relative to enhancements to current systems and/or other efforts requiring consortia system involvement. In addition, a DCSS Project Leader will be assigned to each consortia to facilitate communication and remove barriers to efficient operations.

3. Execute Local Consortia Governance Structure

Each consortia lead agency shall operate under a governance structure, established in cooperation with member agencies, that supports its primary functions, including administering the governance structure, involving consortia members in decision-making per governance agreements, operating the system, and providing oversight and support to member agencies. Support to member agencies includes, but may not be limited to, providing consortia system training, help desk type services, and timely distribution of data necessary for effective case processing and/or reporting.

4. Execute Local Consortia Project Management Plan

Each consortia lead agency shall develop a Project Management Plan for its consortia, incorporating key supporting documents necessary to effectively operate the system. Generally recognized systems engineering concepts employ project management concepts including, but not limited to, master scheduling, work planning, quality

assurance, and risk management processes. DCSS will work through PAG to further define this task necessary to ensure appropriate consortia operation.

5. Develop and Execute Local Consortia Budget

Each consortia lead agency shall plan, develop, secure, and execute a budget for operation of its consortia system. The budget planning and development process occurs annually to coincide with development of the Governor's Budget. Each consortia lead shall determine the costs for maintenance and operation of the consortia system, including recurring and non-recurring costs. In addition, each consortia lead shall submit cost estimates as requested for statewide enhancements proposed by DCSS. These consortia costs are separate and distinct from the lead agency's share of costs for participation as a member of the consortia system.

6. Submit Local Consortia Budget Justifications

Each consortia lead agency shall timely submit requested EDP items, projects, and/or spending justification(s) in sufficient detail to permit necessary DCSS evaluation. Further justification also shall be submitted timely and in sufficient detail for inclusion in federally-required Advance Planning Documents and Updates. Such documentation is required for DCSS to secure appropriate federal approvals necessary for receipt of federal financial participation (FFP). These approvals are necessary prior to incurring expenses.

7. Allocate Local Consortia Costs to Members

Each consortia lead agency shall appropriately allocate consortia costs to its local agency members based on a statewide formula to be developed by DCSS. Currently each consortia allocates costs among member agencies based on its own allocation method, generally including network costs and utilization rates, staffing and equipment costs, and other items of expense. Beginning with the Statewide Annual Performance Report for FFY 2002, DCSS plans to collaborate with consortia leads to develop a single statewide allocation methodology. A single allocation method will ensure statewide comparability among local agencies on the federal cost-effectiveness measure.

8. Support Management Information Needs

Each consortia lead agency shall meet standard and ad hoc management information reporting requirements, as defined through the PAG and RAW processes, necessary to support the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement effort. DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies, will further define and refine data elements and management reporting requirements. The intent is to build upon existing data elements and consortia reporting capabilities; however, additional reporting efforts may be required.

9. Convert Two Interim Consortia Systems (BEST and CHASER)

The consortia lead agencies for BEST and CHASER will collaborate with DCSS to convert from their systems to CASES. The effort to improve uniformity, operating efficiency, and reduce risk in converting to a single statewide system, requires

continued reduction of the number of interim consortia systems. As a result, the conversion of BEST and CHASER to CASES is planned. Project management plans governing these conversions will be developed.

10. Conduct Consistency Assessment (ARS and CASES)

The consortia lead agencies for ARS and CASES will collaborate with DCSS to conduct a consistency assessment of the two consortia systems. The effort to improve uniformity, operating efficiency, and reduce risk in converting to a single statewide system, requires further assessment of the functionality of these two systems. The Consistency Assessment Project will identify specific functional changes that would have to be made to ARS and CASES to meet specified state and federal system requirements and to bring them into conformity with a single statewide approach.

11. Participate in CCSAS Activities

Each consortia lead agency shall participate as necessary in the planning, development, design, and implementation of the CCSAS. Resource planning is underway for the CCSAS effort and will require significant commitments from consortia lead agencies. As contract negotiation proceeds and contract terms are made available, consortia lead agencies will participate in necessary resource planning as well as other activities. The outcome of the resource planning process will result in specific and detailed workload requirements for consortia lead agencies; the CCSAS workload requirements are in addition to normal consortia administrative and operating tasks.

Performance Measures:

- Effective communications.
- Change requests processed timely.
- System members/users understand system functionality and uses.
- Budget information submitted accurately, with necessary justification, and on time.
- Management information reports issued timely.
- Conversions (BEST and CHASER) completed on time, within budget, and without service interruption.
- Consistency Assessment Project completed on time.
- CCSAS participation requirements met.

Compliance Measures:

- Case processing requirements are met.
- Data definitions are accurate.

- System functionality permits accurate and timely processing of work.

Authority:

AS.1.2 Manage and Fully Utilize Consortia Systems

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency manages and fully utilizes the capabilities of their consortia system to support child support program business processes while moving toward uniformity of use with other local agencies. In particular, each local agency will use the capacity of its consortia system to track needed case actions, support proactive case management, report timely and accurate program and fiscal information necessary for effective program management, and improve customer services by being responsive to the information needs of customers. It is the responsibility of each local agency to manage as well as promote full and appropriate use of their automation system.

Standard:

AS.1.2 The local child support agency manages and makes full and appropriate use of its consortia system in accord with operating directives and functional capabilities.

Tasks:

1. Execute Annual Automation Cooperation Agreement

Each local child support agency shall enter into an Annual Automation Cooperation Agreement (ACA) with DCSS. The ACA is incorporated as an addendum into the POC between DCSS and the local child support agency. The ACA delineates general terms, roles and responsibilities, automation requirements, special circumstance provisions (i.e., terms and conditions specific to a local agency), and financial requirements.

2. Participate in Local Consortia Governance

Each local child support agency shall participate in decision making and other activities as agreed upon under the local consortia governance and operating structures. It is anticipated that consortia members be consulted and participate in key operational decision-making. For example, determining which automated filters and screens are applied to data returns from various databases including the Federal Case Registry.

3. Ensure Local Consortia Systems are Fully Utilized

Each local child support agency shall participate in training and other consortia activities designed to ensure that member agencies are informed and fully utilize system capabilities. Local agencies are responsible for understanding and executing procedure and practice to optimize appropriate use of consortia system capabilities.

4. Eliminate Local Consortia System Work-Arounds

Each local child support agency shall fully utilize the capabilities of their consortia system and shall not institute any work-around that is unauthorized by the consortia lead agency. Furthermore, each local child support agency is responsible for reporting any authorized work-around to DCSS, prior to implementation and on an on-going basis via the ACA. Each local child support agency shall inventory and submit a list and description of any existing authorized or unauthorized work-around as part of its ACA.

5. Submit Annual EDP Budget Planning Information

Each local child support agency shall timely submit, in accordance with DCSS instructions, requests for electronic data processing (EDP) services and equipment. The DCSS and local agencies use the annual EDP budget planning process to ensure that local automation needs are met. DCSS directives define automation activities that are claimable as EDP maintenance and operations (M&O) including personal computers, network services, help desk and training support, documentation, and user procedure guides. This includes local agency staff, county information technology/data processing costs, and any EDP contracts for consultant services, hardware, software or telecommunications.

In addition, DCSS directives define recurring and non-recurring EDP M&O and provide instructions for justification of both types of technology resources. Local agency EDP item(s), project(s), and/or spending justifications shall be submitted in sufficient detail to permit necessary DCSS evaluation. Further justification also shall be submitted timely and in sufficient detail for inclusion in federally-required Advance Planning Documents and Updates. Such documentation is required for DCSS to secure appropriate federal approvals necessary for receipt of federal financial participation (FFP). These approvals are necessary prior to incurring expenses.

And, finally, DCSS also has issued EDP M&O instructions and guidelines that local agencies should follow in budget planning and development. These include, but may not be limited to: (a) hardware and software standards denoting the standard personal computer hardware configuration and acceptable price ranges for procurement of the standard system; and (b) industry standard three-year replacement cycle for personal computers and five-year replacement cycle to printers and servers.

6. Manage EDP Resources

Each local child support agency shall manage EDP funding for the purposes identified and allocated through the annual EDP budget planning and allocation process. Expenditures are claimed by category and project within category to ensure spending is controlled and does not exceed state and federally approved budget categories and line items. Other requirements also apply to the expenditure of EDP funding including, but not limited to, the need for prior approval of: (a) contracts, leases, and purchase orders in excess of \$100,000; and (b) contract, lease or purchase order amendments that increase costs above the \$100,000 threshold and/or extend the term by more than 60 days. Additional guidance in this area is provided under AS.2. Financial Operations. DCSS will perform consortia level reviews to ensure that local agencies procure only standard hardware and software and that version controls are synchronized across all member counties.

7. Use Management Information Reports

Each local child support agency shall understand and utilize the standard and ad hoc management information reporting capabilities of their consortia system. Effective use of consortia system reporting capabilities will enhance informed decision-making and

support the QAPI effort. DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies, will further define and refine data elements and management reporting requirements.

8. Convert Two Interim Consortia Systems (BEST and CHASER)

The seven local child support agencies currently operating under the BEST and CHASER consortia systems will collaborate with their consortia leads and with DCSS to convert to CASES. The effort to improve uniformity, operating efficiency, and reduce risk in converting to a single statewide system, requires continued reduction of the number of interim consortia systems. As a result, the conversion of BEST and CHASER to CASES is planned. Project management plans governing these conversions will be developed.

9. Participate in CCSAS Activities

Each local child support agency shall participate as necessary in the planning, development, design, and implementation of the CCSAS. Resource planning is underway for the CCSAS effort and will require varying levels of participation by all local agencies. As contract negotiations proceed and contract terms are made available, local agencies will participate in necessary resource planning as well as other activities. The outcome of the resource planning process will be specific and detailed additional workload requirements for local agencies.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency understands system functionality and uses.
- Budget information submitted accurately, with necessary justification, and on time.
- Local agency EDP expenditures are for the purposes and amounts approved by DCSS through the annual EDP planning and budget allocation process.
- Local agency produces and uses management information reports.
- Conversions (BEST and CHASER) completed on time, within budget, and without service interruption.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agencies fully utilize system functionality.
- No unauthorized work-around.
- EDP expenditures do not exceed amounts allocated.

Authority:

- DCSS CSS Letter 00-11, 01-01 and 02-06.
- DCSS LCSA Letter 01-34.

AS.1.3 Retire Legacy Systems

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency plans for, and aggressively implements, activities required to accomplish the transfer of needed operational and case data to their consortia system. Local agencies currently rely, to differing extents, upon databases that exist outside of their consortia system. Reliance on databases external to consortia systems compromises overall operating efficiency and effectiveness. To increase interim operating effectiveness and reduce future risk in conversion to CCSAS, the DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies is leading an effort to identify and document existing legacy systems statewide.

Standard:

AS.1.3 The local child support agency has a planned and systematic approach to timely retirement of legacy systems.

Tasks:

1. Evaluate Legacy Systems

Each local child support agency shall identify and evaluate all legacy databases that currently exist outside of their consortia system. The evaluation will include, but may not be limited to, the nature of the database, data stored, data access, and criticality to the business process. The evaluation will serve as the foundation for development of a legacy system disposition plan for each local agency.

2. Develop Legacy System Disposition Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop, in collaboration with the DCSS, a plan for appropriate disposition of each identified legacy database. The objective is to reduce reliance to the extent possible on databases that exist outside of consortia systems. The disposition plan should include actions to be taken, resources to be utilized, and timeframes for completion of key milestones. Disposition plans may include retirement of some or all legacy systems within the next two years, and/or planning for longer-term solutions within the framework of the CCSAS project. Each local agency's legacy system disposition plan shall be submitted to and approved by the DCSS.

3. Execute Legacy System Disposition Plan

Each local child support agency shall implement their approved legacy system disposition plan in accordance with agreed upon processes and timeframes. Approved disposition plans will be incorporated within the POC between DCSS and each local agency.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency participates in DCSS Legacy System Assessment process.
- Local agency has an approved Legacy System Disposition Plan.

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- Local agency completion of planned actions within the Legacy System Disposition Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Retirement of legacy systems in accordance with DCSS approved local agency Legacy System Disposition Plan.

Authority:

AS.1.4 Ensure Title IV-A/IV-D Program Interface

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely and correctly distributes collections received on behalf of current or former TANF recipients. Varying local systems, procedures and practices in providing child support program access to necessary data complicates interface with the Title IV-A Program. The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies, is leading an effort to achieve uniformity of practice in data exchange statewide. The focus is on ensuring timely and accurate information on any customer's TANF program eligibility and participation, including calculation of the Unreimbursed Assistance Pool, information for the TANF 60-month time on-aid restriction, and the timeliness of transmission of aid status data.

Standard:

AS.1.4 The local child support agency has timely and accurate interface, automated or otherwise, with the Title IV-A Program.

Tasks:

1. Evaluate Current IV-A/IV-D Interface

Each local child support agency shall identify and evaluate the current status of necessary data exchanges with their local Title IV-A Program. The evaluation shall include, but may not be limited to, the nature and type of available data, data storage, and data accessibility. The evaluation will serve as the foundation for development of a plan to ensure timely and accurate Title IV-A Program data exchange for each local agency.

2. Develop IV-A/IV-D Interface Approach

Each local child support agency shall develop, in collaboration with the DCSS, an approach to necessary data exchange that meets the needs of both the IV-A and IV-D programs. The objective is to ensure the timely availability of accurate TANF information; to the extent feasible this will mean integration of aid payment history data into existing consortia systems. The interface approach shall be captured in a plan that includes actions to be taken, resources to be utilized, and timeframes for completion of key milestones. Each local agency TANF interface plan shall be submitted to and approved by the DCSS.

3. Execute IV-A/IV-D Interface Plan

Each local child support agency shall implement their approved IV-A/IV-D interface plan in accordance with agreed upon processes and timeframes. Approved interface plans will be incorporated within the POC between DCSS and each local agency.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency participates in DCSS IV-A/IV-D interface assessment process.
- Local agency has an approved IV-A/IV-D Interface Plan.

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- Local agency completion of planned actions within the IV -A/IV -D Interface Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency IV -A/IV -D Interface Plan in place.
- Timely and accurate data interface between IV -A/IV -D programs.

Authority:

AS.1.5 Optimize Office Automation

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency makes optimum use of office automation systems to enhance staff effectiveness and program performance. Office automation includes, but may not be limited to, word processing, spreadsheets, email, calendaring/scheduling, and Internet services. Presentation, diagramming (e.g., organization charts, work flow, etc.), and local database software tools are also often included in the standard office automation suite. Local agency office automation shall be consistent with statewide requirements established by the DCSS. Optimal use of office automation means being alert to, and taking advantage of, office automation technology to improve staff effectiveness, speed, and accuracy in their work.

Standard:

AS.1.5 The local child support agency uses office automation design and functionality that promotes worker effectiveness and efficiency, including personal computers, email, Internet access, telephone messaging systems, imaging and others.

Tasks:

1. Evaluate Office Automation Needs

Each local child support agency shall evaluate its office automation needs to ensure that worker effectiveness and efficiency is optimized. Local office automation shall be consistent with statewide requirements established by the DCSS.

2. Schedule Office Automation Purchases

Each local child support agency shall integrate office automation and annual budget planning processes to ensure that needs are met. Local agencies shall plan, budget, and purchase items consistent with an office automation replacement schedule and process. The DCSS has adopted the industry standard three-year replacement cycle for personal computers and five-year replacement cycle to printers and servers. The office automation replacement schedule and costs shall be reflected in the local agency budget planning and development process.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency EDP Budget Planning Request submitted accurately, with necessary justification, and on time.
- Local agency completion of approved office automation replacement plans and schedule, if necessary.
- Local agency completion of Equipment Replacement Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency timely and accurately provides budget information.

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- Office automation and equipment expenditures do not exceed amounts allocated.

Authority:

AS.1.6 Promote Customer Service Using Automation

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that local child support agencies use automation in a manner that promotes customer service and satisfaction. Automation is key in providing customer access, through self-directed or personal contact, to account and non-account specific information. In addition, local agencies may use automation in non-routine ways such as to initiate automated calls to customers or permit payment via credit card. The automation implications include use of Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Web-based/Internet, and telephone, routing, and messaging systems (for personal contact with local agency call center or casework staff or automated dialing and messaging). Each local agency shall assess current automation uses to optimize customer service and satisfaction.

Standard:

AS.1.6 The local child support agency makes optimal use of automation in promoting customer service and satisfaction within current operating environment and resources.

Tasks:

1. Inventory Existing Automation Uses that Enhance Customer Service

Each local child support agency shall identify and document current uses of automation that enhance customer service and satisfaction. Local agencies use automation in different ways to enhance customer accessibility to services and information. These uses include, but may not be limited to, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) usage, call centers, websites, automated dialing, scheduling appointments, credit card payments, electronic funds transfer, and mass mail production. The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies, will lead an effort to identify and document (i.e., existing scripts, types of data available, and security policies and procedures) current automation uses and innovations.

2. Develop Statewide Plan

The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies, shall develop a statewide plan for using automation to enhance customer service within the current pre-statewide automation and resource environment. The statewide plan shall provide the framework and guidelines for operation and use of automation to enhance customer service and satisfaction. The intent is to ensure optimal use of automated approaches to customer service, while at the same time achieving greater uniformity and consistency of practice.

3. Develop and Execute Local Plans

Each local child support agency shall develop and execute a plan, consistent with the statewide plan and requirements, to enhance customer service and satisfaction through automation.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency completes automated customer service inventory.

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- Completion of Statewide Automated Customer Service Plan.
- Local agency completes local Automated Customer Service Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Consistent and uniform use of automated customer service options statewide.

Authority:

AS.1.7 Execute Operational Recovery Plan

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has an Information Technology Operational Recovery Plan that includes a business resumption strategy in the event of natural disaster or other disruption in standard operating procedures. Operational recovery generally covers, but may not be limited to: identification of mission critical business processes, resources, and systems; development and execution of test scenarios; and ongoing training of all identified critical personnel.

Standard:

AS.1.7 The local child support agency has an Information Technology Operational Recovery Plan to ensure that automation systems operate continuously with minimal interruption.

Tasks:

1. Evaluate System Recovery Requirements

Each local child support agency shall evaluate its operational recovery needs to ensure mission critical automated systems are restored within the defined maximum outage defined in that plan. Local agencies shall work with the necessary automation support personnel (e.g., local county IT staff, consortia technicians, etc.) to ensure the evaluation is complete and critical recovery resource needs are fully understood. The evaluation shall be performed based on standards established by the DCSS.

2. Execute System Recovery Requirements

Each local child support agency shall execute a system operational recovery plan to ensure that automation systems operate continuously with minimal interruption. The execution of the operational recovery plan will include the training of critical resources as well as the testing and documentation of test results, which are used to improve the quality and completeness of the plan. The operational recovery plan, and supporting business resumption plan, shall be consistent with statewide requirements established by the DCSS.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency completes operational recovery evaluation.
- Local agency has an Operational Recovery Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency Operational Recovery Plan limits disruption in operation of automation systems when there is an emergency event.

Authority:

AS.1.8 Execute Information Security Plan

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency develops and implements an Information Security Plan. Information security ensures the integrity and protection of information assets. The Information Security Plan includes, but may not be limited to, the identification of the basic controls in place for physical security and data access as well as procedures for how to assess security vulnerabilities. An important element of information security is the regular backup of critical data and tests to ensure accurate restoration of data using the backup media. Equally important are the appropriate controls to ensure automated access to sensitive data is secured and tested regularly.

Standard:

AS.1.8 The local child support agency has an Information Security Plan to ensure that physical and data access security controls are continuously analyzed, improvements implemented, tested, and documented on an ongoing basis.

Tasks:

1. Evaluate Information Security Requirements

Each local child support agency shall evaluate its information security policies, procedures, and enforcement tools to ensure mission critical systems and data are not vulnerable to security attacks. The evaluation of both physical security and data access includes, but may not be limited to: periodic data backup and restoration assessments; authentication (e.g., user IDs, passwords, etc.); anti-virus software; firewalls implementation; and process for documenting and reporting information security incidents. The evaluation shall be performed using standards established by the DCSS.

2. Execute Information Security Requirements

Each local child support agency shall execute an Information Security Plan to ensure that physical and information assets are sufficiently protected from unauthorized access of use. The execution of the Information Security Plan will include the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and processes as well as education of staff in the appropriate access and use of sensitive data. An incident reporting process is required that includes a lessons learned analysis in which incidents are documented and used to improve security measures. The information security plan shall be consistent with statewide requirements established by the DCSS.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency completes security evaluation.
- Local agency has an Information Security Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Number of information security incidents with timely, accurate and complete reports.

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- Ongoing information security assessment.
- Information security plans tested and process improvement cycle in place.
- Local agency Information Security Plan prevents security incidents.

Authority:

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ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
AS.1 AUTOMATION**

AS.1.1 Manage Local Consortia Systems (Consortia Lead Agencies)

AS.1.2 Manage and Fully Utilize Consortia Systems

AS.1.3 Retire Legacy Systems

AS.1.4 Ensure Title IV-A/IV-D Program Interface

AS.1.5 Optimize Office Automation

AS.1.6 Promote Customer Service Using Automation

AS.1.7 Execute Operational Recovery Plan

AS.1.8 Execute Information Security Plan

AS.2 Financial Operations

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies share in the responsibility to effectively plan for and use available fiscal resources to operate California's child support program. The DCSS secures program funding through the annual Governor's Budget process, allocates available funding to local agencies, advances and reimburses local agencies for services provided, and oversees local agency financial operations. Local child support agencies manage allocated funds in accord with federal and state requirements in carrying out their mission to provide child support services.

The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies, established in late 2000 the framework and approach within which the local agency budgeting, allocation and oversight processes operate. The goals and guiding principles contained in the document Budget Allocation Methodology and Budget Planning, Monitoring and Oversight for Local Child Support Agencies continues to govern our fiscal operations. The local agency budgeting, allocating, and monitoring processes were first used in state fiscal year (SFY) 2001-02 and continued in SFY 2002-03. The same processes will continue in SFY 2003-04, with the planned addition of an important element-the use of caseload in directing the allocation of new resources.

Each local child support agency has an important role in planning, administering, and monitoring the financial operations of its organization in a manner that supports and contributes to the provision of excellent child support services. This includes having mechanisms in place to effectively plan for and develop an annual budget; execute the annual budget in accord with program priorities, appropriate and allowable costs, and reporting requirements; and, track, monitor and adjust, as necessary, expenditures throughout the year to live within amounts allocated by DCSS. A sound budget plan, together with skilled execution, is critically important to support the effective delivery of child support program services.

The DCSS and local child support agencies recognize the critical importance of sound fiscal management and are committed to ensuring that available funding is used wisely, effectively and efficiently in furthering the statewide goals and objectives of the child support services program.

AS.2.1 Develop Local Agency Budget

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has in place an annual budget planning and development process to accurately identify funding needs for the coming SFY. The key elements of budget planning include identification of ongoing items of expense, cost increases for ongoing items of expense, and anticipated new items of expense. Each local agency will determine the specifics of its annual budget planning and development process necessary to meet the needs of the DCSS as well as local governments.

Standard:

AS.2.1 The local child support agency has an annual budget planning and development process that timely results in an accurate budget plan for the coming SFY.

Tasks:

1. Establish Budget Planning Process

Each local child support agency shall have a clearly defined internal budget planning and development process through which to identify its needs for the coming SFY. The local agency process should permit thoughtful analysis and input, consistent with program priorities addressed in approved local performance goals, to identify upcoming budget needs. A sound budget planning and development process includes procedures, formats, and timelines for: (a) technical budget building; (b) soliciting input from staff (usually managers and supervisors) to identify budget assumptions and changes from currently approved funding levels; (c) reviewing budget assumptions and budget change proposals; and (d) decision-making on budget assumptions and changes, with feedback to staff on those approved, modified, or denied.

2. Establish Technical Budget Construct

Each local child support agency shall design and use a technical budget construct format to display its local agency budget. While the specific budget format for each local agency may differ, it should address at least the following categories of expense, together with sufficient underlying line item detail within each category necessary to clearly and accurately capture expenses. The general budget categories shall capture:

- **Personal Services.** Includes salaries, wages and benefits of all employees including permanent and temporary help, as well as overtime and pay differential costs.
- **Operating Expenses.** Includes facilities (space, utilities, and maintenance), equipment, postage, travel, general expenses (communications, supplies, membership dues, subscriptions, etc), and contracts related to operating items.
- **Direct Services Contracts.** Includes legal services, investigator services, service of process, access to criminal information laboratory services, and other direct services contracts.

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- **Indirect Expenses.** Includes indirect overhead costs resulting from countywide overhead (A-87) and residual settlement of approved district attorney indirect cost rates.
- **Automation.** Includes recurring and non-recurring maintenance and operation costs, interim system conversion costs, enhancements, and consortia lead agency costs.

In addition, each local child support agency shall maintain necessary supporting detail and schedules to substantiate expenses included in the annual budget document. Supporting schedules include, but are not limited to, salaries and wages listing all authorized Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions by classification, salary range, number of FTEs, and total cost; contractual agreements; and equipment lists.

3. Build Annual Budget Plan

Each local child support agency shall build an annual budget that reflects how it will spend its child support program allocation for the upcoming SFY. Generally, the budget building process consists of three discrete steps: analysis of the current year baseline allocation/budget and expenditures; routine baseline cost and price adjustments; and non-routine or policy related cost adjustments. The specific budget building steps used by each local child support agency may vary, but should generally follow this model. A brief description of each of the three steps follows:

The starting point for budget building is the DCSS current year allocation/budget, adjusted to consider actual expenditures and removal of one-time expenses. It is expected that local agencies will thoroughly review their prior year actual and current year projected expenditures in determining their overall future budget needs. Focused attention should be given to personnel costs, since these costs make up the greatest share of the total budget. It is important to separately identify and document staffing assumptions including (a) current year number of vacant positions, attrition rates, hiring plans for the remainder of the year, and number of positions expected to be vacant at year-end; and (b) budget year number of positions anticipated to be vacant at the start of the year, anticipated attrition rates during the year, and hiring plans for the coming year plotted by month by position type and cost. The result of this step is a revised current year baseline allocation/budget.

The second step in the budget building process to adjust the current year revised baseline allocation/budget to reflect increases or decreases in the cost of doing business. These adjustments should be documented and may include items such as changes in salaries (cost of living, merit, or step increases), benefits (retirement, health, dental), facility expenses, direct service contacts, and other price or routine changes in the cost of doing business. Non-routine, unusual cost increases, or new items of expense should not be included. These adjustments should be reflected in the next step of the budget building process. The result of this step is a baseline budget for the coming SFY, commonly referred to as the budget year baseline budget.

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The third step in the budget building process is to adjust the budget year baseline budget to reflect proposed new items of expense, budget changes or new initiatives. These types of new cost items or budget proposals are considered policy decisions and must be separately identified and justified, regardless of whether they can be funded from within a local agency's existing allocation/budget or additional new funding is requested. The result of this final step in the three-step budget building process is a proposed budget plan for the budget year.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency staff understands and participates in the annual budget process.
- Local agency operating plans and priorities, including hiring, are reflected in the budget.

Compliance Measures:

- Budget planning and development process in place.
- Technical budget construct format in place.
- Timely construction of an annual budget plan built with sufficient detail.

Authority:

- CCR Chapter 1, Program Administration.

AS.2.2 Participate in State Budget Development

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency participates in the statewide annual budget development process. DCSS directly participates in development of the annual Governor's Budget for California's child support program. Local agencies play an important role in this process by providing necessary fiscal information, including early identification of funding needs, collection trends, and new collection opportunities.

Standard:

AS.2.2 The local child support agency develops and timely submits to DCSS accurate fiscal information necessary to complete the State budget development process.

Tasks:

1. Submit Requested Budget Information

Each local child support agency shall submit fiscal information necessary to timely and accurately develop the annual Governor's Budget for the child support program. While DCSS is responsible for preparing the proposed statewide budget, each local agency plays an important role in timely responding to requests for fiscal information and/or otherwise providing cost and expenditure estimates for both administrative and EDP activities. Further, local agencies may be requested to assist in estimating collection trends, amounts or new sources. It is important that each local child support agency develops, maintains, and timely submits fiscal information necessary to assist DCSS in developing the annual Governor's Budget.

2. Submit New Funding Needs

Each local child support agency shall identify and submit to DCSS new funding needs for the upcoming budget year through the Budget Display process and/or immediately upon identification. New funding needs include requests for: (a) new items of expense, budget changes or new initiatives whether or not they can be funded from within the local agency's current year allocation/budget amount or they require additional new funding; and (b) an increase in the local agency's current year allocation/budget amount necessary to cover costs identified in its proposed budget year baseline budget.

Each fall, DCSS uses the Budget Display Form CS 921 process to capture, among other information, new funding needs anticipated for the upcoming SFY. Local agencies must identify and submit new funding needs through this process. In addition, local agencies must notify DCSS immediately upon identification of new funding needs for the budget year that may become known at times not consistent with the Form CS 921 process. In either circumstance, local agencies shall provide sufficient detail and justification to permit DCSS evaluation and decision-making.

Performance Measures:

- Timely and accurate response to requests for budget information.

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- Timely identification and submission of new funding requests.

Compliance Measures:

- Timely and accurate submission of Budget Display Form CS 921.
- Submission of new funding requests immediately upon identification of need.

Authority:

- CCR Chapter 1, Program Administration.

AS.2.3 Participate in State Allocation Process

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency participates in the statewide annual allocation process. Upon submission of the annual proposed Governor's Budget for the upcoming SFY, DCSS begins the annual allocation process that culminates with a final allocation based on the enacted Budget Act. DCSS allocates available funding among local agencies consistent with the goals and guiding principles of the DCSS/CSDA agreed upon Budget Allocation Methodology. The participation of each local agency in providing accurate and timely fiscal information is critically important to ensure the fair and equitable allocation of available funding among all local agencies.

Standard:

AS.2.3 The local child support agency provides accurate and timely fiscal information necessary to fairly and equitably allocate available funding among local agencies.

Tasks:

1. Submit Budget Display Information

Each local child support agency shall accurately complete and timely submit the Budget Display Form CS 921 as requested by DCSS. The CS 921 is a budgeting tool used for several purposes including collecting information used in developing the upcoming budget year administrative allocations for local agencies. The CS 921 Budget Display reports all items by Budget Component including: (a) detailed information on current year staffing delineated by function performed; (b) number of authorized versus filled positions, contrasted with positions filled at mid-year in the prior SFY, by function; (c) county authorized monthly average salary and total annual salaries and wages by function; and (d) other expenditures and costs such as operating expenses, direct service contracts, indirect expenses, and automation. This information enables DCSS to fairly and equitably distribute funding among local child support agencies in the upcoming budget year, and is critically important in moving to allocations based largely on caseload to staff ratios beginning in SFY 2003-04.

The CS 921 process is conducted annually in the fall, more frequently if determined necessary, using a Web-based access tool. The Budget Display process was developed by DCSS in collaboration with a local child support agency financial workgroup in late 2000. Key to this process is the use statewide of uniform definitions of various items of expense, particularly staffing and the definition of work activities performed. It was recognized that local agencies use different position classifications and job titles that may not be comparable across local agencies statewide. Therefore, all job categories are defined by the functions performed, not by position classification, to ensure comparability between local agencies. This approach permits DCSS to uniformly identify statewide the number of positions involved in core staffing (casework, investigation, legal, SDU, and clerical support), targeted programs, administrative, and automation functions. Local child support agencies shall strictly use the Budget Display definitions in completing Form CS 921.

2. Maintain Accurate Caseload Counts

Each local child support agency shall follow established policies and procedures to ensure that accurate and comparable caseload counts are maintained at all times. In particular, strict adherence to case opening, case closure and duplicate case resolution policies and procedures are critically important to maintaining accurate caseload counts statewide. Under the federal and state performance based approach, an accurate caseload count is an increasingly important factor in determining performance on the five federal measures and in allocating funding among local agencies. Further, the performance based statutory construct emphasizes the use of consistent data, including caseload, upon which to base performance comparisons among State's and local child support agencies.

3. Participate in Assessing New Funding Requests

Each local child support agency identifying new funding needs anticipated for the upcoming SFY shall provide sufficient information necessary for DCSS decision-making. As noted previously, each fall DCSS uses the Budget Display Form CS 921 process to capture, among other information, new funding needs anticipated for the upcoming SFY. Local agencies must identify and submit new funding needs through this process. In addition, local agencies are required to notify DCSS immediately upon identification of new funding needs for the budget year that may become known at times not consistent with the Form CS 921 process. In either circumstance, local agencies shall provide sufficient detail and justification to permit DCSS evaluation and decision-making.

New funding needs include requests for: (a) new items of expense, budget changes or new initiatives whether or not they can be funded from within the local agency's current year allocation/budget amount or they require additional new funding; and (b) an increase in the local agency's current year allocation/budget amount necessary to cover costs identified in its proposed budget year baseline budget.

DCSS will consider new funding needs identified by local agencies to evaluate necessity and determine sufficiency of available funding. DCSS will promptly inform each impacted local agency of its decision and reflect amounts approved in related allocation letters.

4. Assess Sufficiency of Allocation Amounts

Each local child support agency shall carefully assess its budget plan needs compared to amounts proposed through the DCSS allocation process. The DCSS uses an annual allocation process that mirrors the Governor's Budget development and enactment cycle. The process consists of three standard allocation letters including: (a) an Initial Planning Allocation letter based on funding in the January Proposed Governor's Budget; (b) a Final Planning Allocation letter based on funding in the May Revision of the Proposed Governor's Budget; and (c) a Final Allocation letter based on the Governor's Budget as enacted in the Budget Act effective July 1st. Generally, the standard allocation letters should be released in February, June, and August of each year. Non-

standard allocation letters may be issued for individual local agencies based on special circumstances or funding needs.

Local agencies shall timely assess amounts allocated compared to their annual budget plan needs, including any new funding requests as approved by DCSS. Local agencies finding that allocated amounts are insufficient to maintain current operations shall immediately inform DCSS, and provide sufficient detail and justification to permit DCSS evaluation and decision-making. DCSS will make adjustments as deemed appropriate and possible within the total amount available through the annual Budget Act. The DCSS Final Allocation letter provides the final amount available to each local agency.

5. Reconcile Budget Plan to Allocation

Each local child support agency shall refine its proposed budget plan as necessary to live within the amounts included within the DCSS Final Allocation letter. Total funding available for allocation to local agencies is governed by the amount appropriated through the annual Budget Act. At times, this amount may not be sufficient to cover the anticipated expenses or needs of all local agencies. Nevertheless, the DCSS final allocation amounts cannot be exceeded and local agencies must adjust their proposed budget plan and spending accordingly.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency actively participates in the budget allocation process.
- Local agency reconciles its budget plan and final allocation amount.

Compliance Measures:

- Timely submission of Budget Display Form CS 921.
- Maintains accurate caseload count through strict adherence to case opening, case closure and duplicate case resolution policies and procedures.
- Submission of new funding requests with necessary supporting detail.

Authority:

- CCR Chapter 1, Program Administration.
- DCSS allocation letters.
- DCSS policy letters and regulations related to activities impacting caseload count.

AS.2.4 Execute Final Local Budget Plan

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency executes its approved annual budget plan in accord with its final allocation. While the budget is intended to reflect program operating plans and priorities, additional processes and procedures are necessary to ensure effective budget execution. In particular, effective budget administration requires an informed leadership team, mechanisms to track and monitor expenditure patterns and levels, and the ability to timely adjust spending patterns as may be necessary, based on program priorities, to live within amounts allocated.

Standard:

AS.2.4 The local child support agency tracks, monitors, projects, and timely adjusts spending based on program priorities to ensure that funding is correctly and effectively used and annual allocation amounts are not exceeded.

Tasks:

1. Finalize Local Annual Budget Plan

Each local child support agency shall refine and finalize its annual budget plan as necessary to ensure that program priorities are reflected and final allocation amounts are not exceeded. Adjustments to local agency budget plans may be necessary due to: (a) allocation of resources to DCSS targeted program areas; (b) allocation of one-time funding to a local agency to meet special needs or perform a necessary task, i.e., space move, data clean-up, or other; (c) final allocation amounts exceeding anticipated funding levels; and (d) final allocation amounts insufficient to cover anticipated expenses or needs. For all of these reasons, local agencies must timely adjust their proposed budget plan accordingly, resulting in a final annual budget plan.

2. Implement Statewide Targeted Programs

Each local child support agency shall reflect in its final annual budget plan implementation of statewide-targeted programs. Within the federal and state statutory construct for the child support program, DCSS has established statewide program priorities and related funding through the annual allocation process. These statewide program priorities, referred to as Targeted Programs, to date include: Customer Service; Ombudsperson Program; Complaint Resolution; State Hearings; Training; Customer and Community Awareness, Education and Outreach; Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement; and Program Improvement Teams.

Funding and claiming for targeted programs is not controlled to budget category or line item, with the exception of the Customer Service Initiative. However, each local agency shall: (a) meet the intent of directives for each targeted program; (b) demonstrate evidence of a level of effort in each targeted program that reflects at least the amount allocated; and (c) demonstrate evidence of work performed, performance outcomes achieved or anticipated, and timeframes related to each.

3. Implement Special Funding Agreements

Each local child support agency that receives special funding to accomplish a specific task(s) shall reflect the related implementation plan in its final annual budget. DCSS may from time to time provide one-time special funding to a local agency to accomplish a specific task(s) or process consistent with ensuring an effective statewide uniform child support program. For example, special one-time funding may be allocated to a local agency to complete data clean-up efforts, resolve interest calculation issues, retire legacy systems, convert to a single automated system platform, complete necessary space moves, or other reasons.

Funding and claiming for special funding agreements may not be controlled to a budget category or line item. However, a local agency that receives special funding shall: (a) develop related implementation plans and timeframes to meet the intent of the special funding agreement; (b) demonstrate evidence of a level of effort that reflects at least the amount allocated; and (c) demonstrate evidence of work performed and performance outcomes achieved. Further, local agency special funding agreements shall be incorporated within annual POC.

4. Submit Required Final Budget and Expense Reports

Each local child support agency shall submit information necessary to show how final allocation amounts have been used to develop a final annual budget plan. Each fall, DCSS uses the Budget Display Form CS 921 process to capture, among other information, how local agencies have translated their current year allocation into an authorized local operating final budget plan. The Budget Display information assists DCSS in monitoring local agency budget planning and execution.

In addition, each local child support agency is required to timely submit the Budget Display Form CS 921 and quarterly Administrative Expense Claim Form CS 356 series to DCSS to enable completion of required statewide semi-annual and annual reports. The reports must include the total cost of program administration broken out by: (a) total employee salaries and benefits, identified by number of FTEs by function; (b) contractor costs; (c) space charges; (d) payments to other county agencies; and (e) indirect costs.

5. Maintain Budget Category Controls

Each local child support agency shall maintain budget category controls as required for local administrative and EDP costs. Budget category controls apply to three areas of the budget: (a) Customer Service Initiative funding; (b) total funding for local non-EDP administrative costs; and (c) total funding EDP costs. It should also be noted that EDP funding has additional controls by categories and specific project code. Each local agency shall ensure that appropriate budget category and/or other sub-categories and project codes are maintained. A brief description of each controlled budget category follows.

Initial funding for the Customer Service Initiative was provided through CSS Letter # 00-07 dated November 7, 2000. The letter states that, "...funding allocated via this letter for customer service initiatives must be used to establish or enhance local customer

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service activities as described herein and cannot be redirected to other activities or costs, or used to supplant existing customer service activities.” Further, the letter states that, “Funds not used for the Ombudsperson Program (i.e., cost of position(s) is less than the amount allocated) can be redirected to the Local Customer Service Initiative activities and vice versa, but can only be expended on customer service activities.” It was also anticipated that the Customer Service Initiative allocation would be, and has been, integrated within the annual allocation process. Nevertheless, the Customer Service Initiative budget category controls were not removed.

In addition, the allocation for each local agency separately identifies local non-EDP administrative costs and EDP costs. Allocation letters state that budget category controls apply to these two components of the allocation and transfer between these categories is not permitted. The DCSS is required to obtain prior federal approval for all EDP expenditures through the annual Advance Planning Document (APD) process and must submit updates and secure federal approval if changes are proposed. In addition, DCSS must secure state approvals for EDP expenditures pursuant to the annual budget process.

Each local agency must ensure that additional budget controls within the EDP allocation are followed and maintained. EDP budget category controls apply to costs for: (a) local agency M&O recurring; (b) local agency M&O non-recurring; (c) consortia recurring M&O; (d) consortia non-recurring M&O; (e) enhancements; and (F) conversions. Costs within these budget categories are further delineated by project codes and accounts. In addition, local agencies are subject to general EDP regulations that include, but are not limited to, restrictions regarding contracts, leases, and purchase order in excess of \$100,000. All such EDP agreements in excess of \$100,000 must have prior federal approval before execution. Further, prior federal approval is required if any amendment to such agreements increases cost above the \$100,000 threshold and/or extends the time for more than 60 days. Each local agency shall timely submit requests for prior approvals to DCSS for approval and further processing.

6. Track, Monitor and Adjust Expenditures as Necessary

Each local child support agency shall have policies and procedures to ensure timely tracking and monitoring of expenditures compared to allocation/budget amounts. Further, each local agency shall identify variances and take necessary action to ensure that the budget plan is executed correctly, effectively, and without exceeding amounts allocated. Each local agency may determine the specific internal budget controls and mechanisms to be used. However, key aspects of strong internal control and effective budget execution systems usually include: (a) an informed leadership team responsible for budget implementation and control; (b) mechanisms to routinely track and monitor expenditure patterns and levels; (c) mechanisms to routinely project future expenditures; and (d) processes and procedures to timely adjust spending patterns as may be necessary, based on program priorities, to live within amounts allocated. Strong internal controls and tracking mechanisms enable informed decisions by administrators in managing financial resources to meet program priorities and achieve the highest possible level of performance.

Performance Measures:

- Timely reconciliation of budget plan and final allocation amount.
- Execution of allocation/budget according to plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Submission of annual budget display in sufficient detail and on time.
- Process to track, monitor and make timely adjustments to expenditure trends.
- Expenditures not exceeding budget allocation.

Authority:

- 45 CFR Section 95.605 relating to APD process.
- FC Section 17306, 17310,17312 and 17600.
- CCR Chapter 1, Program Administration.
- DCSS allocation letters.
- Plan of Cooperation between DCSS and a local agency.

AS.2.5 Participate in Statewide Budget Monitoring

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely participates in the process to monitor budget execution statewide. Each local agency is charged with developing internal controls and mechanisms to effectively execute its individual budget plan and not exceed allocated amounts. At the same time, DCSS is charged with ensuring that statewide child support program resources are effectively utilized. This requires that DCSS carefully monitor the expenditures of each local agency during the year and make adjustments, as necessary, among local agency allocations to ensure optimal use of total statewide funding. Each local child support agency shall participate in this process by submitting timely and complete administrative expense claims, expenditure projections upon request, and otherwise contributing to ensure that statewide program needs are met.

Standard:

AS.2.5 The local child support agency provides timely, complete and accurate expenditure information necessary to make allocation adjustments, as necessary, to ensure effective use of available statewide funding.

Tasks:

1. Submit Expenditure Projections

Each local child support agency shall submit, upon request from DCSS, expenditure projections necessary to assess spending trends and patterns statewide. Assessment of local agency expenditures occurs at least at mid-year, more frequently if deemed necessary.

2. Participate in Statewide Budget Adjustment Processes

Each local child support agency shall participate with DCSS to ensure that available resources are effectively utilized statewide. At times it may be necessary and appropriate to reallocate available funds among local agencies during the year. Any such reallocations will occur within the context and guiding principles established under the Budget Allocation Methodology and Planning, Monitoring and Oversight process.

Performance Measures:

- Timely and accurate expenditure projections.
- Timely participation in reallocation processes, as necessary.

Compliance Measures:

- Mechanisms to complete accurate expenditure projections.

Authority:

- CCR Chapter 1, Program Administration

AS.2.6 Meet IV-D Fund Management Requirements

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency uses Title IV-D funds in accordance with federal and state requirements. The child support program is governed by both general and specific requirements relative to fund management. It is the responsibility of each local agency to understand and operate using appropriate fund management requirements. Expenditure of program funds shall be reasonable, appropriate, allowable, claimable, and reported correctly. Further, local agencies must limit expenditures to the level and purposes for which funds are allocated by DCSS.

Standard:

AS.2.6 The local child support agency maintains and can document rigorous adherence to IV-D fund management requirements including reasonable and allowable costs, cost allocation, claiming and reporting.

Tasks:

1. Establish Accounting Systems

Each local child support agency shall have in place and maintain accounting standards and systems consistent with uniform accounting procedures prescribed by federal and state requirements. These standards conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Further, local agencies shall establish and maintain and exclusively use separate interest bearing accounts for child support program funds. In addition, the Title IV-D Program has specific requirements related to expenditures claimed for reimbursement that must be followed including, but not limited to, definition of expenditure and allowable costs. Local agencies shall timely and accurately pay bills and invoices in accordance with acceptable accounting practices and IV-D fund management requirements.

2. Comply with Allowable Cost Requirements

Each local child support agency shall have in place policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that all expenditures claimed for reimbursement are appropriate, reasonable and allowable. Expenditures must be appropriate and reasonable in accordance with the approved Title IV-D State Plan and all applicable statutes, regulations and policies. Further, expenditures must be consistent with the federal definition of allowable costs, i.e., an allowable activity refers to any program specific activity listed as eligible for federal financial participation (FFP) under federal rules.

3. Comply with Prior Approval Requirements

Each local child support agency shall comply with federal and state requirements to obtain necessary prior written approval for certain expenditures. Local child support agencies shall obtain prior written approval from DCSS for: (a) all EDP expenditures; (b) contracts, purchase orders or lease agreements associated with EDP expenditures in excess of \$100,000; (c) amendments to contracts, purchase orders or lease

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agreement associated with EDP expenditures that exceed the \$100,000 threshold or extend term by more than 60 days; and (d) indirect cost rates previously charged for administrative costs of local offices of the District Attorney (DA). In addition, local child support agencies shall obtain prior written approval from the State Controller's Office for countywide overhead costs in accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circular A-87 and related federal and state requirements.

4. Comply with Cost Allocation Requirements

Each local child support agency shall have in place policies, procedures and practices necessary to comply with time study and/or certification requirements adopted under the revised Administrative Expense Claim (AEC) CS 356 series beginning with the July through September 2002 quarter. Establishment of independent local child support agencies dedicated solely to the child support program enables use of simplified time study and/or certification processes. It is anticipated that time certification, instead of the prior time study process, may be used for the majority of local agency staff who are dedicated solely to performing child support functions. Time certification may be used when an employee is involved in only a few activities and the effort involved covers long periods without diversion to other efforts. Local agency staff performing other activities, activities not eligible for FFP, or activities where time cannot be easily identified, shall continue to time study. Each local child support agency shall use time study and/or certification processes to appropriately document and allocate costs.

5. Comply with Indirect Cost Rate Requirements

Each local child support agency shall prepare and maintain documentation necessary to support reimbursement for administrative overhead costs related to the child support program. The child support program has operated with two types of indirect cost rate (ICR). Prior to transition from the offices of local district attorneys to independent child support agencies, an ICR may have been established by a local agency and approved by DCSS to reimburse administrative overhead costs charged by the DA. No new ICR of this type will be established; however, reconciliation and close out of a previously approved ICR is necessary. In addition, county governments may charge an ICR to the child support program for support of countywide administrative costs (generally referred to as OMB A-87). These ICR require prior approval from the State Controller's Office under guidance of federal and state requirements.

6. Reconcile Monthly Advance Payments

Each local child support agency shall have in place policies, procedures and practices necessary to account for and reconcile monthly advances of funds on at least a quarterly and year-end basis. At the beginning of each month DCSS advances to each local agency one-twelfth of 90 percent its total allocation amount including administration and EDP maintenance and operation, and federal and state funds. The advances permit local agencies to operate pending reimbursement for expenses incurred. Advances are not considered claimable expenditures until actual, verifiable transactions and payment occurs. Each local child support agency shall account for, monitor, and reconcile advance funding to ensure that cash on hand does not exceed amounts deemed necessary and appropriate per federal and state requirements. Upon

completion of each reporting quarter, DCSS will compare the amount claimed by a local agency on the CS 356 to the advances issued for the same reporting quarter, and make a corresponding adjustment to the amounts advanced in subsequent months.

7. Submit Administrative Expense Claims

Each local child support agency shall have in place policies, procedures and practices necessary to accurately and timely submit the quarterly Administrative Expense Claim (AEC) CS 356 series. The AEC CS 356 series was updated and simplified beginning with the July through September 2002 quarter, including electronic submission through a Web-based process similar to that used for the Budget Display CS 921. Further, the AEC CS 356 series definitions for each category of expense, while fewer in number, are consistent with those used on the Budget Display Form CS 921.

Each local child support agency shall submit expenditure claims for reimbursement under the IV-D Program only for actual payments made for administrative, personnel, vendor, service provider, contractor or other costs. This includes indirect costs allocable to the quarter being reported in accordance with an approved cost allocation plan. Expenditures are considered made on the date the payment occurs, regardless of the date of receipt of the goods or performance of the service.

Local agency timely and accurate submission of the AEC CS 356 series is extremely important because it is used to: (1) monitor local agency expenditures; (2) meet federal quarterly financial reporting requirements to secure FFP for child support program administrative costs (Child Support Enforcement Program Financial Report, OCSE-396A); and (3) report semi-annually and annually to the state legislature expenditures by specified expense categories. As a result of the importance of this data, failure to timely submit accurate and complete AEC CS 356 series information can result in compliance action including, but not limited to, withholding advances or other payments to a local child support agency.

In addition, local child support agencies shall timely submit revisions to claims submitted or supplemental claims in accord with applicable federal and state requirements. A revised administrative expense claim contains all expenditure information and replaces a prior claim submitted for a quarter. A revised claim is submitted when over one half of the line items of the claim previously submitted must be revised. Revised claims may only be submitted prior to scheduling and payment by DCSS. A supplemental administrative expenditure claim is an additional claim to make positive or negative line item adjustments to a previously filed quarterly claim. Supplemental claims must be filed no later than nine months from the end of the reporting quarter in which the costs are paid by the local agency.

8. Submit Collection and Distribution Reports and Recoupments

Each local child support agency shall timely submit monthly reports of collections and distributions forms CS 34 and CS 35 beginning with the June 2002 report month. These forms are electronically submitted using a secured website, replacing CS 800, CS 803, and CS 820 and their supplemental reports. In addition, each local agency

shall timely submit the federal and state share of recoupment based on data contained on the CS 34 and CS 35.

9. Comply with Audit Requirements

Each local child support agency shall have in place policies and procedures to periodically review and validate internal fiscal controls, compliance with federal and state requirements, and proper recording and reporting of transactions. Local governments are subject to general audit requirements; however, a local child support agency may establish additional audit protocols to ensure compliance with child support program requirements. In addition, local child support agencies are subject to and shall cooperate with audits conducted by DCSS or its agent, the Bureau of State Audits, the Department of Finance, the State Controller's Office, the federal government, and any others with necessary jurisdiction and authority.

Further, each local child support agencies shall retain for audit purposes all records that support administrative expenditure claims submitted to DCSS. Generally, all financial records, supporting documents, statistical documents and other records pertinent to an administrative claim shall be maintained for four years and four months. Exceptions to general retention rules apply to claims subject to an open federal or state audit, civil litigation, or court order that extends the retention periods.

Performance Measures:

- Adherence to IV-D fund management requirements.

Compliance Measures:

- Submission of AEC CS 356 series by 15th calendar day after end of quarter; to permit DCSS to submit OCSE 396A-Part 1 (Quarterly Report of Expenditures and Estimates) within 30 days after end of quarter, OCSE 396A-Part 2 (Prior Quarter Expenditure Adjustments) within 30 days after end of quarter, and OCSE 396A-Part 3 (Semi-Annual Budget Projections) within 30 days after end of quarters 2 and 4.
- Submission of CS 34 by 15th calendar day after end of month; to permit DCSS to submit both OCSE 34A and OCSE 396A-Part 1 within 30 days after end of quarter.
- Submission of federal and state share of recoupment equal to amount reported in CS 35 (Box 190) by 30th calendar day after end of month.

Authority:

- 45 CFR Sections 74.2, 74.53, 95-19, 95-611, 95.7, 301.16, 302, 302.10, 302.12, 302.14, 302.15, 304.20, 304.25, 304.29, 304.30 and 304.50.
- Federal OMB Circular A-87 and A-133.
- Federal Child Support Enforcement Program Financial Report form OCSE-396A.
- Federal Management Circular (FMC) 74-4.

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- FC Sections 17306, 17310,17312, 17540, 17600, 17604, 17700, 17704 and 17710.
- Government Code Section 8543, 12430, 29410-29416 and 30200.
- CCR Chapter 1, Program Administration
- LCSA Letter #02-16, Revised Administrative Expense Claim CS 356 Series, dated June 5, 2002.
- LCSA Letter #02-27, Revised Administrative Expense Claim CS 356 Series and Training Information, dated August 15, 2002.
- Generally Accepted Accounting Principles of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

BEST PRACTICES
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
AS.2 FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

AS.2.1 Develop Local Agency Budget

- Consider assigning responsibility for budget control and oversight to designated managers making them accountable and informed.
- Standard technical budget construct formats to display a local agency budget are available.
- The budget development process should give focused attention to attrition rates, hiring plans, and priorities for hiring. The Personal Services budget category generally makes up the greatest share of local agency budgets. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly understand attrition rates by functional area, to set priorities for future hiring, and to ensure that managers are authorized to hire in accordance with established hiring priorities and internal processes. Hiring should be targeted to those areas of highest priority consistent with local agency strategic, operating, and budget plans. Hiring should not be a random, isolated event; it should be carefully planned, authorized and monitored.

AS.2.2 Participate in State Budget Development

- Early and accurate identification of new funding needs is critically important to ensure that these costs can be recognized through the DCSS allocation process. Local agencies should monitor significant items of cost that may be subject to change, particularly costs not within their control. For example, local agencies should closely monitor collective bargaining processes, increases in contracts for direct services, and general price increase data. Different costing scenarios should be developed and measured against current funding levels.

AS.2.3 Participate in State Allocation Process

AS.2.4 Execute Final Local Budget Plan

- Local agencies should give special attention to instructions and directives contained within allocation letters and related policy directives. While implementation of statewide-targeted programs is not controlled to budget categories, the expectation is for a level of effort that at least matches the allocation amounts. Therefore, local agencies should appropriately designate managers responsible for building capacity and implementing initiatives consistent with related directives.
- Creation of division and/or major functional budgets and assignment of budget execution responsibilities to management team members has proven beneficial for some local agencies. Members of the management team should be knowledgeable of the annual budget plan and actively engaged in ensuring that it is effectively administered. One way to do this is to assign budget control and execution

responsibilities to management team members by subdividing the total budget into separate budgets for each of the major organizational divisions or functional areas. Generally, only those items of expense over which the manager has some control are included in division level budgets. For example, the organization's staffing complement, salary savings requirement, contracting, training, and similar special items of expense. Costs for which an individual manager has little or no control usually continue to be controlled centrally. For example, facility leases, other facility operating costs, supplies, and other similar items. This is a budget management approach only; it is not necessary to maintain accounting records in this manner.

- While the detailed content and format for local agency budgets and accounting systems/record keeping are not required to mirror the detailed budget components of Budget Display Form 921, the ability to cross walk between the budget, accounting records, and Budget Display is highly desirable. Similarly, the roll-up used to prepare the Administrative Expense Claim CS 356 series should have a clear cross walk from accounting records.
- Some local agencies prepare in advance contingency plans containing possible reduction options, in priority order, that could be executed if determined necessary.

AS.2.5 Participate in Statewide Budget Monitoring

- Local agencies should at all times maintain accurate and up-to-date fiscal records, including timely posting to accounting records, payment issuance, claims processing, and related activities. In addition, local agencies should, based on expenditures patterns, trends, and other information, routinely project expenditures for the remainder of the SFY. Completion of routine expenditure projections permits early identification of potential anomalies and corrective actions as necessary.

AS.2.6 Meet IV-D Fund Management Requirements

- Some local agencies have developed specialized fiscal training for managers and staff directly involved in IV-D fund management activities.

AS.3 Contracting

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize the importance of appropriately contracting for goods and services that enable optimum use of resources and assist in achieving performance objectives. Further, it is recognized that contracting processes should adhere to high standards consistent with related rules and regulations. The DCSS and local agencies will seek cost-effective statewide contracting opportunities as well as promote sound and appropriate business practices in contracting for goods and services.

AS.3.1 Establish Contacting Policies and Practices

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and adheres to sound contracting policies, procedures and practices. Contracting policies and procedures include, but may not be limited to, contract planning, contractor solicitation mechanisms and processes, contractor selection, contract negotiation and award, contract oversight, and contract evaluation. It is important that each local agency has in place established policies and procedures through which to timely and effectively contract for goods and services.

Standard:

AS.3.1 The local child support agency has policies, procedures, and practices that lead to necessary, appropriate, timely and sound contractual agreements for goods and services.

Tasks:

1. Execute Contracting Process

Each local child support agency shall develop and execute a clear and sound process for identifying the necessity of and the means through which to appropriately and timely secure contracted goods and services. The contracting process should address, but may not be limited to: contract planning, contractor solicitation mechanisms and processes, contractor selection, contract negotiation and award, contract oversight, and contract evaluation. Each local agency shall establish the capacity to effectively contract for goods and services in accordance with established policies, procedures and processes.

2. Execute Other Purchasing Mechanisms

Each local child support agency shall develop and execute clear and sound guidance for the use of other (non-contract) purchasing mechanisms. Local agencies use differing purchasing mechanisms to secure goods and services including, but not limited to: plans of cooperation, memoranda of understanding, purchase agreements, service agreements, and fee for service. Each local agency shall establish policies and procedures that clearly delineate the appropriate mechanisms, rules, and requirements in using specified purchase arrangements.

3. Maintain List of Contracts

Each local child support agency shall maintain an accurate and up to date list of all contracts, clearly delineating all direct service contracts. Direct service contracts are defined as those necessary to the delivery of child support program functions such as investigative services, service of process, and others. Direct service contracts do not include administrative service functions. Refer to Form CS 921, Budget Display instructions for further definition.

Performance Measure:

- Local agency has clearly defined contracting rules and requirements.

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- Local agency has capacity to effectively execute the contracting process.
- Local agency has rules and requirements for use of non-contract purchasing arrangements.

Compliance Measure:

- Contracts and other purchase agreements are executed appropriately.
- List of contracts in place.

Authority:

AS.3.2 Participate in Statewide Contracting Efforts

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency participates in determining the feasibility of and executing, as determined appropriate, statewide contracting efforts. The Department of Child Support Services in collaboration with local child support agencies is assessing the feasibility of contracting on a statewide basis for certain child support program functions including laboratory service, service of process, telephone language line assistance, and other services that may be deemed appropriate.

Standard:

AS.3.2 The local child support agency has participated in and will execute, as determined appropriate, contracts under the statewide contracting initiative.

Tasks:

1. Participate in Feasibility Study

Each local child support agency shall participate as requested by DCSS in the statewide contracting feasibility study. The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility and cost effectiveness of statewide contracting for services used by all local agencies. The feasibility study is currently focused on laboratory services, services of process, and language line assistance programs. Each local agency shall also maintain the ability to implement the statewide contracting option if and when it is determined appropriate.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency participates in statewide contracting initiative.
- Local agency maintains ability to implement statewide contracting option.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

**BEST PRACTICES
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
AS.3 CONTRACTING**

AS.3.1 Establish Contacting Policies and Practices

AS.3.2 Participate in Statewide Contracting Efforts

AS.4 Human Resources

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies share in the belief that staff are our most valuable resource in the effort to ensure excellent child support services. It is vital that each local child support agency effectively manage their human resources to achieve desired program results. This includes ensuring that a sufficient number of staff, with the right competencies and skills, are organized and effectively deployed to meet customer needs and achieve optimal performance outcomes. Therefore each local child support agency shall have a skilled human resources management program that addresses resource planning, personnel system requirements, cultural competence, civil rights, personnel policies and practices, and employee recognition.

The DCSS and local child support agencies will approach management of human resources recognizing the critical importance of our staff to the performance and success of California's child support program. Accordingly, focused attention will be given to ensuring that staff possesses the critical skills and tools necessary to be successful in completing their work and that staff efforts are recognized. The DCSS and local agency management teams are committed to employing effective human resource management skills and practices.

AS.4.1 Conduct Human Resource Planning

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency carefully assesses its human resource needs necessary to achieve its child support program performance goals. Effective human resource planning involves defining the work to be performed; determining the duties and critical skills of each job category; and organizing and deploying an adequate number of qualified staff. Local agencies will actively plan to meet their current and future human resource needs in recognition of the critical role of staff in ensuring a high performing and effective child support program.

Standard:

AS.4.1 The local child support agency has an effective human resources planning process that is responsive to current and future needs.

Tasks:

1. Assess Current and Future Human Resource Needs

Each local child support agency shall assess its human resource needs in concert with its strategic, performance objective, and budget planning processes. The vision, values and mission of an organization provide the broad context within which human resource needs are planned. Human resource needs are further defined by the local agency's leadership vision, service delivery philosophy, and organizational design. Each local agency must consider what it intends to accomplish and how it intends to achieve its desired results. Based upon these assessments and understanding of the current and future work to be performed, human resource needs are evaluated to determine necessary skill sets and numbers of staff.

2. Determine Job Duties and Critical Skills

Each local child support agency shall define the duties and critical knowledge, skills and abilities of each job to be performed. Local agency personnel systems generally use position classification and/or job category schemes to define the knowledge, skills and abilities required. Each local agency must understand the work to be performed in order to properly align the requirements of each job to an appropriate position classification and/or job category. Understanding and matching the work to be performed with the necessary critical skill sets required to be effective in the job, is essential in achieving the desired outcomes.

3. Organize and Deploy Human Resources

Each local child support agency shall organize and deploy its human resources in a manner necessary to meet its performance objectives. Most local agencies are currently organized based on a service delivery philosophy that embraces either a "cradle to grave" or "functional" approach to the child support program business. A few local agencies use a combination of both approaches or a hybrid model of each. Local agencies using differing organizational models have achieved successes. Therefore, it is important that each local agency determine the service approach that best facilitates

its desired program results, while at the same time recognizing the corresponding implications in terms of number of staff needed, critical skill sets needed, worker job satisfaction, and customer impact.

4. Monitor Staff Attrition

Each local child support agency shall routinely track and evaluate staff attrition to determine root causes. Staff turnover may be an indicator of many issues including, but not limited to, employee job satisfaction, workplace environment or practices, salary levels, promotional opportunity, and office location. It is important that local agencies use exit interviews or other means to determine the reasons for staff turnover and to identify and institute remedies as appropriate. Further, the analysis of attrition rates also should be used to determine and project current and future hiring needs, as well as the implications for organizational design and resource deployment, training, budget planning, and overall program performance.

5. Provide Input to Budget Process

Each local child support agency shall determine its current and future human resource needs and provide necessary input to the budget planning and development process.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency routinely plans and evaluates current and future human resource needs.
- Local agency tracks, monitors and analyzes staff attrition and retention rates to identify potential work place problems.

Compliance Measures:

- Current and future human resource needs are directly linked and reflected in the budget planning and development process.

Authority:

- Government Code.

AS.4.2 Manage Personnel System Requirements

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency works within its local personnel management system to create and maintain a workforce equipped to achieve program performance goals. All local government personnel management systems must meet merit system requirements. Further, local child support agencies are required to perform program functions exclusively through the use of civil service employees. The State Personnel Board (SPB) is responsible for overseeing and in some cases establishing and maintaining personnel standards on a merit basis for local government agencies. The DCSS has contracted with SPB, who in turn has contracted with Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS), to perform these functions.

Local child support agencies operate in counties that differ on whether they manage their own approved local merit systems (ALMS) or contract for this service as an interagency merit system (IMS) county. There are 28 counties that manage their own ALMS, for which CPS performs periodic audits to ensure that personnel practices are in compliance with local agency personnel standards (LAPS) approved by SPB. There are 30 IMS counties for which CPS serves as the personnel department for the county. The CPS functions performed for IMS counties include conducting recruitment processes, examinations, certification of eligibility lists, appointments monitoring, transaction processing, classification and compensation standards, and disciplinary actions. Regardless of whether a local agency operates within an ALMS or IMS county, these same personnel functions must be performed.

In addition to differing merit system operations, local governments also differ on whether they operate personnel systems using a centralized agency or delegate some or all personnel functions to local departments. Each local child support agency must effectively work within the personnel management system established by its local government to achieve program performance results.

Standard:

AS.4.2 The local child support agency works within its local personnel management system to create and maintain a workforce equipped to achieve program performance goals.

Tasks:

1. Establish Personnel Classifications

Each local child support agency shall participate, as appropriate, in establishing and maintaining the personnel classifications necessary to effectively perform the work of the child support program. Under the DCSS contract with CPS, local agencies will move towards use of a standardized classification plan, including standard position classifications with shared educational, experience, knowledge, skills and ability requirements. It is important that each local agency participates in the process to

establish and maintain a classification and compensation plan that timely meets the needs of the program.

2. Conduct Personnel Examinations

Each local child support agency shall timely plan and conduct open and promotional examinations necessary to maintain a skilled workforce. Local agencies should periodically assess, plan and conduct personnel examinations necessary to ensure that vacant positions can be timely filled. Further, examination plans should also address the need to keep eligibility lists current while at the same time providing current staff with the opportunity to compete for new and promotional positions.

3. Conduct Recruitment Processes

Each local child support agency shall timely conduct recruitment processes to fill vacant positions in accordance with hiring priorities established by the leadership team. Recruitment and hiring processes should be conducted meeting merit system requirements. Particular attention should be given to developing a sound recruitment plan, taking proactive steps to generate a diverse applicant pool, and using selection processes that accurately assess and score relevant education, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities. Local agency staff involved in the selection process should be trained in interviewing and evaluating applicants based on job requirements. The recruitment and hiring process should be conducted in a manner that leads to appointment of the most qualified staff.

4. Implement Performance Evaluation Processes

Each local child support program shall establish and maintain processes to routinely provide employee performance evaluation and feedback. Local agency processes may vary based on local personnel systems but generally will include establishment of clear performance expectations, performance measures, pre-determined evaluation periods, and feedback mechanisms.

5. Implement Grievance Processes

Each local child support agency shall establish and maintain processes to receive, investigate, and appropriately resolve employee grievances. Local agency processes, as well as the matters subject to the employee grievance process, may vary based on local personnel systems and collective bargaining agreements. Local agencies shall have appropriate processes in place to receive and respond to employee grievances.

6. Implement Disciplinary Processes

Each local child support agency shall establish and maintain appropriate employee disciplinary process pursuant to personnel system rules and requirements. Local agency processes may vary based on local personnel systems and collective bargaining agreements.

7. Implement Return to Work Program

Each local child support agency shall promote employee health and safety as well as return to work programs for those who are absent from the job due to illness or injury. Local agencies have an important role in promoting employee health and safety. It is equally important that local agencies also establish and promote effective return-to-work programs.

8. Participate in Collective Bargaining

Each local child support agency shall participate, as appropriate and requested, in local collective bargaining on matters related to the child support program. Generally, collective bargaining is solely within the purview of local governments; therefore, the role that local child support agencies may play will vary. To the extent possible and appropriate, local child support agencies shall participate in collective bargaining matters impacting their operation.

9. Maintain Job Action Contingency Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop and maintain a Job Action Contingency Plan in the event of a labor action that disrupts the provision of child support services. Local agencies should plan for any disruptions in service that may occur as a result of a job action by assessing impacts and developing ways in which to continue at least those services deemed vital and necessary. Local agencies shall develop these plans within the context and guidelines provided by their local personnel systems.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has a workforce equipped to achieve program performance goals.
- Local agency effectively works within the local personnel system to maintain a skilled workforce.

Compliance Measures:

- Employee performance evaluation process in place.
- Employee grievance process in place.
- Employee discipline process in place.
- Job Action Contingency Plan in place.

Authority:

- Government Code.

AS.4.3 Maintain Culturally Competent Organization and Workforce

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency is culturally and linguistically competent in responding to the needs of its customers. A culturally and linguistically competent organization and workforce is a key element of Customer Service and Satisfaction (refer to Chapter 6). While assessing the needs of customers is a focus within Chapter 6, this element addresses the internal organization and personnel processes necessary to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of customers.

Culture is comprised of a group's learned patterns of behavior, values, norms and practices, which can strongly influence the provision and response to services provided. The ability of each local agency and its staff to actively apply knowledge of culture and language when interacting with members from diverse backgrounds is a measure of cultural competency. Attainment of a high measure of cultural competency is an important aspect of providing accessible and responsive child support program services and information. The provision of culturally competent services ultimately leads to improved access and service results.

Standard:

AS.4.3 The local child support agency has a culturally and linguistically competent organization and workforce, reflecting the cultural and linguistic needs of its customers.

Tasks:

1. Conduct Organizational Assessment

Each local child support agency shall assess the competency (knowledge, skills and abilities) of its staff and organization as a whole to provide services that meet the cultural and linguistic needs of its customers. An organizational assessment shall identify current levels of cultural and linguistic competence, including overall policies and administrative direction, human resource composition and location, competency levels of staff, and customer assessments of services provided.

2. Develop a Cultural Competence Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement a Cultural Competence Plan (CCP) consistent with DCSS standards and requirements to achieve cultural competence. A culturally competent local agency is one that acknowledges and incorporates at all levels the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally-unique needs. It is recognized that cultural competence is a goal toward which professionals, agencies and systems should strive. However, the local agency CCP is expected to illuminate the next steps in the process of becoming culturally competent including policies, procedures and practices; staff training; and methods and means to promote cultural competence.

3. Implement Cultural Competence Plan

Each local child support agency shall implement its Cultural Competence Plan (CCP) consistent with planned actions, milestones, and timeframes.

4. Implement Language Assistance Program

Each local child support agency shall ensure timely implementation of a Language Assistance Program as part of its CCP. Access to services for person with limited English proficiency (LEP) also is addressed in Chapter 6. Each local agency shall assess the non-English language skills of staff, particularly those in designated public contact positions, and ensure that appropriate language assistance is available. Local agencies may meet the language assistance needs of its customers through a range of oral language assistance options including hiring bilingual staff or interpreters, contracting for outside interpreter services, arranging for use of voluntary community interpreters, and using telephone language interpreter services. Each local agency shall have policies and procedures in place to ensure timely access to language assistance.

Performance Measures:

- The caseload composition (utilization rates) of the local agency reflects the cultural, ethnic and language characteristics of the general population in the geographical area served.
- Levels of satisfaction with services experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse customers are equivalent to those of all customers in general.

Compliance Measures:

- Cultural Competence Plan in place.
- Language Assistance Program in place.

Authority:

- DCSS proposed customer service and civil rights regulations.

AS.4.4 Maintain Civil Rights Program

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a civil rights program that protects the rights of employees and customers.

Standard:

AS.4.4 The local agency has in place an effective civil rights program.

Tasks:

1. Develop Civil Rights Plan

Each local child support agency shall protect the civil rights of employees and customers served by the child support program. The DCSS civil rights regulations require development of a local agency civil rights plan addressing key aspects of related statute, regulation and policy. Each local agency shall develop the required civil rights plan addressing, among other areas, the rights of persons with disabilities (including persons with hearing and/or sight impairments), and the right of all persons to be free from unlawful discrimination or harassment.

2. Implement Civil Rights Policies and Procedures

Each local child support agency shall have in place policies, procedures and practices that actively promote a workplace that is free from unlawful harassment. The policies and procedures shall address, but may not be limited to: sexual harassment; discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or age; equal employment opportunity; hostile work environment; and the civil rights complaint, investigative, and appeal processes.

3. Designate Civil Rights Coordinator

Each local child support agency shall designate a Civil Rights Coordinator (CRC) to ensure protection of the civil rights of employees and customers. Designation of a CRC is required by DCSS and serves as the point of contact on civil rights issues within the local agency and with DCSS. The local agency shall ensure that the CRC receives necessary training.

4. Conduct Civil Rights Training

Each local child support agency shall provide training to all staff on key policies, procedures and practices governed by the Civil Rights Program. The training shall include, but may not be limited to: sexual harassment; discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or age; equal employment opportunity; and hostile work environment. Training shall also address the civil rights complaint, investigative, and appeal processes.

5. Maintain Civil Rights Complaint Process

Each local child support agency shall establish and maintain a civil rights complaint process that may be accessed by employees and/or child support program customers. The process shall include, but may not be limited to: complaint filing; complaint

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investigation; complaint response; complaint appeal processes; and timeframes. Each local agency shall ensure that the civil rights complaint process is adequately publicize and available.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency protects the civil rights of employees and customers.
- Number of civil rights complaints received, by employee or customer, by type of complaint, number withdrawn or otherwise resolved, number formally investigated, outcome of investigation, and number with a finding of violation.

Compliance Measures:

- Civil Rights Plan in place.
- Civil rights complaint process is prominently posted in local agency offices.

Authority:

- DCSS Civil Rights Regulations.

AS.4.5 Maintain Personnel Policies

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and maintains personnel and workplace policies that promote a professional and positive environment. The workplace should reflect the values of the child support program and the local agency. These values include caring, fairness and respect, cooperation, customer service, and a commitment to children. Each local agency shall provide a workplace that cooperatively focuses on service to customers and achieving program performance, while recognizing and respecting others.

Standard:

AS.4.5 The local child support agency has personnel and workplace policies that are applied equitably, fairly and consistently, and promote a professional and positive workplace.

Tasks:

1. Develop Written Personnel Policies

Each local child support agency shall clearly define the responsibilities of staff and the organization through written personnel and workplace policies and procedures. These policies and practices should ensure that all employees are treated equitably, fairly, and consistently. At the same time, policies and practices should recognize and respect the diversity and needs of all employees, while maintaining a professional and positive work environment. Written policies and procedures should address key operating issues, but at the same time maintain a worker friendly atmosphere. Key polices generally include, but may not be limited to: hours of operation; alternate workweek schedules; flexible work hours; workplace violence and security; and employee assistance programs.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has necessary personnel and workplace policies and procedures.

Compliance Measures:

- Required core hours of operation are maintained.

Authority:

- Government Code.

AS.4.6 Conduct Staff Recognition Program

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency demonstrates that it values staff through recognizing their contributions to the success of the child support program. Employee recognition programs can contribute to a professional and positive workplace. Each local agency should consider and use a repertoire of employee appreciation and recognition tools.

Standard:

AS.4.6 The local agency has a professional and positive work place that recognizes accomplishments, offers professional and organizational growth opportunities, and appropriately includes staff in decision-making.

Tasks:

1. Evaluate Workplace Policies and Practices

Each local child support agency shall evaluate its existing workplace environment, policies and practices that may contribute to employee dissatisfaction and turnover. Creating an environment in which all staff feels valued and appreciated requires creation of an appropriate approach and tools as well as concerted and consistent efforts. The entire management and supervisory team must value and join forces in achieving the desired professional and positive workplace.

2. Solicit and Value Inclusion

Each local child support agency shall create and maintain an environment that encourages full participation of all staff in meeting its operational and performance goals. Local agencies will seek out opportunities for appropriate staff inclusion in decisions that affect their work.

3. Implement Employee Recognition Program

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement appropriate opportunities to demonstrate that staff are valued and recognized. There are many ways in which a local agency may demonstrate that it values its employees including, but not limited to: recognition of accomplishments; inclusion; enabling individual, career and professional growth; team and individual awards; recognition luncheons; and notes of appreciation for a job well done.

Performance Measures:

- Employee job satisfaction and retention rates are high.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency has an employee recognition program.

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
AS.4 HUMAN RESOURCES

AS.4.1 Conduct Human Resource Planning

AS.4.2 Manage Personnel System Requirements

AS.4.3 Maintain Culturally Competent Organization and Workforce

AS.4.4 Maintain Civil Rights Program

AS.4.5 Maintain Personnel Policies

AS.4.6 Conduct Staff Recognition Program

AS.5 Training

Context and Values

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are implementing a Statewide Child Support Training Program. The Training Program is founded on the belief that a state-directed, uniform, and carefully planned and executed training program is essential in ensuring the success of California's child support program. The Training Program is also key to bringing statewide uniformity and consistency in application of policies, procedures and practices. A professional, comprehensive, and uniform training program is an essential element in achieving the overall child support program vision and performance goals.

The design of the Statewide Training Program is consistent with the framework established in the DCSS Training Program Concept Paper issued in November 2000. The concept paper was based largely on the framework established in the 1999 child support reform legislation and the recommendations of the Policies, Procedures and Practices Project (P3 Project) Training Workgroup. The Statewide Training Program is intended to promote personal, professional and organizational competencies and achievements. Perhaps most importantly, the focus is on ensuring that DCSS and local agency staff have the critical skills necessary to do their jobs in a manner that is uniform and consistent statewide, and contributes to meeting program performance goals.

It is within this context that local child support agencies are working in collaboration with DCSS to implement the Statewide Child Support Training Program. Funding has been targeted for training through local agency administrative allocations beginning in SFY 2001-02. When fully implemented the Statewide Training Program will include: required training based on assessed need, use of DCSS-approved standard curriculum, use of DCSS-certified trainers, ongoing evaluation and assessment of training needs and outcomes, and design of curricula to meet the changing needs of the child support program.

AS.5.1 Develop Comprehensive Training Plan

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a comprehensive training plan based on a thorough and comprehensive assessment of critical job skills and the specific training needs of its staff. The Training Plan should clearly delineate the steps necessary to develop and maintain staff competencies to meet job descriptions and performance expectations.

Standard:

AS.5.1 The local child support agency has a comprehensive training plan to timely provide staff with the critical skills necessary to perform their work.

Tasks:

1. Appoint Training Coordinator

Each local child support agency shall appoint a Training Coordinator (TC) to lead, plan, manage, and oversee its local training program. The TC shall have the skills necessary to effectively perform these duties. In addition, the TC serves as the primary contact on training program matters with the Department of Child Support Services. Local agency training coordinators shall participate in development, planning and execution of the Statewide Training Program.

2. Assess Critical Job Skills

Each local child support agency shall participate in the process and/or conduct research to assess the critical skills necessary for effective job performance. Under the Statewide Training Program, critical job skills are assessed based on four staff level groupings, i.e., rank and file, supervisory, management, and executive, as well as job class categories within each grouping. The critical skills necessary to perform in each job grouping and job class are identified.

3. Assess Staff Training Needs

Each local child support agency has in place mechanisms to accurately assess the training needs of its staff. While the critical skills necessary to perform each job will be documented, an important next step is to assess the current skill levels of each staff member. An effective staff training assessment process will clearly identify individual training needs. The focus is on identifying who needs to be trained and their specific training needs.

It should also be noted that the Statewide Training Program uses a Succession Plan concept that recognizes three distinct levels of training within each step of the organizational hierarchy, i.e., rank and file, supervisory, management and executive. Level 1 addresses basic skills/competencies required of every employee in a particular type of job, i.e., caseworker, support services, etc. Level 2 addresses specialized professional skills/competencies required of employees working in particular assignments, e.g., establishment, enforcement, etc. And, level 3 addresses continued skills and competency requirements associated with staying abreast of new trends,

policies and procedures, refreshing perishable skills and preparing for promotion to the next level. The Succession Plan provides a context in which to relate core job competencies to training and development opportunities, career ladders, and career goals.

4. Develop Training Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop a comprehensive training plan to provide critical job skills and meet individual staff training needs. The plan should address all aspects of the training program including delineation of required training, identification of training curricula, scheduling, coverage for staff to attend training, and certified trainers to be used.

It should also be highlighted that the child support program will embark upon additional required training as a result of development and implementation of the single statewide automation system—the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS). This will involve not only technical training necessary to effectively use the system, but also Change Management Training to ensure that staff concerns, issues, and feelings are appropriately addressed.

Performance Measure:

- Local agency has a Training Coordinator.
- Local agency has a comprehensive training plan in place.
- Individual staff skill levels correspond to the critical skills required for the job class.

Compliance Measure:

- Number of Quality Assurance and/or Data Reliability Audit findings attributable to worker error do not exceed acceptable levels.

Authority:

AS.5.2 Deliver and Evaluate Training

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency timely schedules and delivers required and necessary staff training. The Statewide Training Program will provide approved standard core curriculum and certified trainers. In addition, the Statewide Training Program will also amend core curricula to reflect most recent changes and design new curricula to meet immediate needs. Local agencies are responsible to ensure that their staff receives required and/or necessary training to meet performance expectations.

Standard:

AS.5.2 The local child support agency timely delivers training for staff to meet critical job skill requirements and assessed needs.

Tasks:

1. Select Training Curriculum

Each local child support agency shall select appropriate approved training curriculum based on the critical skills required of the job and the assessed needs of staff. Local agencies should develop an individual training and development plan for each staff member based on assessed training needs and job performance expectations.

2. Design Training to Meet Special Needs

Each local child support agency shall design additional training as appropriate to address identified problems and/or needs not addressed through approved core curriculum. Typically the need for special training results from unique or office specific issues that cannot be addressed through core curriculum design. Local agencies that design special training shall follow the Training Proposal protocols and procedures required under the Statewide Training Program.

3. Provide Instructional Modes and Tools

Each local child support agencies shall use instructional modes and tools that best meet the needs of its staff. Instructional modes can vary based on office and staff preferences and may include classroom, self-directed, computer-based, teleconferencing, or others. Instructional tools may include lesson plans for traditional face-to-face presentation, PowerPoint presentations, workbooks, videos, computer-based instructional materials and/or student and instructor handbooks. Local agencies shall determine the most appropriate instructional modes and tools based on assessed needs and preferences.

4. Provide Certified Trainers

Each local child support agency shall ensure that sufficient certified trainers are available to deliver training as scheduled. Local agencies may use in-house certified trainers, share regionally based certified trainers, and/or use certified trainers made available through DCSS from other local agencies or consultants. Each local agency shall determine how best to meet their needs for certified trainers.

5. Schedule Training

Each local child support agency shall timely schedule training to meet the needs of staff and statewide training requirements. Training includes required child support program orientation and core curriculum based on required critical job skills. Local agencies should plan for and provide a staff relief or coverage factor to ensure that staff can attend training as required and scheduled.

6. Deliver Training

Each local child support agency shall timely deliver professional, high quality training as required under the Statewide Training Program.

7. Evaluate Training

Each local child support agency shall conduct ongoing evaluations and assessments of training outcomes. The effectiveness of training programs may be evaluated at different levels including, but may not be limited to: immediate reaction; degree of learning achieved; impact of learning on job performance; and return on investment. Local child support agencies shall ensure that training provided meets its intended outcomes.

8. Practice Continuous Quality Improvement

Each local child support agency shall use the results of training evaluations to improve future training programs. For example, actions will likely include, but may not be limited to, fine-tuning training curriculum, developing new training curriculum, revising instructional modes or tools, and/or developing plans to resolve individual performance issues.

Performance Measure:

- Local agency timely delivers required staff training using approved curriculum and certified trainers.

- Local agency evaluates training outcomes and takes necessary action.

Compliance Measure:

- Staff has required training.

Authority:

- DCSS Statewide Training Program.

AS.5.3 Provide Professional Development and Recognition

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency considers and integrates professional development opportunities within individual training and development plans. While required core curriculum training is a fundamental component of ensuring that staff are equipped to meet performance expectations, there are other professional growth opportunities that should be considered. It is important that staff feel connected to their peers and other professionals in the child support field.

Standard:

AS.5.3 The local child support agency incorporates professional development opportunities within individual training and development plans.

Tasks:

1. Plan for Professional Development

Each local child support agency shall identify appropriate professional development opportunities for interested staff. Professional development opportunities may include conferences, professional training offered by groups external to the Statewide Training Program, or other forums. It is important that staff have opportunities to further their personal and professional growth.

2. Provide for Professional Recognition

Each local child support agency shall seek opportunities to recognize the professional accomplishments of staff. Under the Statewide Child Support Training Program, DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies, plans to develop a professional standards and recognition program. The intent is to enhance the professional standing of those who work within the child support program through development of a workforce that is highly skilled and expert in providing child support services. Options to be considered include establishment of staff certification or credentialing programs, systems of accreditation, and other professional recognition and reward approaches. Local agencies should consider early opportunities to provide staff professional recognition.

Performance Measure:

- Local agency integrates required training and professional development opportunities within individual development plans.

Compliance Measure:

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
AS.5 TRAINING

AS.5.1 Develop Comprehensive Training Plan

AS.5.2 Deliver and Evaluate Training

AS.5.3 Provide Professional Development and Recognition

AS.6 Physical Environment

Context and Values

The physical environment of the local child support agency is an extremely important factor in enabling staff to deliver first-rate services as well as promoting customer access to services. Customer physical accessibility to services is addressed in Chapter 6, Customer Service and Satisfaction; this part will focus on the physical environment of child support program employees. The local child support agency must ensure that the physical environment, furnishings and equipment contribute to staff efficiency and effectiveness. The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize that the physical environment and how it is maintained contributes greatly to how staff feels about their work. Further, it is recognized that how staff feel about their work translates directly to our overall success in achieving child support program performance goals and objectives.

AS.6.1 Maintain Office Accessibility

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency establishes and maintains facilities that are accessible to employees and customers. Office accessibility includes both the geographic location of the office and the ability to navigate into and within the office. To the extent possible, offices should be conveniently located for customers and staff. Further, offices must meet accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities.

Standard:

AS.6.1 The local child support agency has office locations and physical plant requirements that promote employee and customer accessibility.

Tasks:

1. Promote Optimal Office Location

Each local child support agency shall promote the location of offices in geographic areas that best meet the needs of employees and customers. Factors considered in the determining office location include proximity to major population and employment centers, availability of public transportation, and availability of convenient parking. In addition, local agencies shall also consider use of non-traditional locations and/or means to provide staff and customer access, including through community-based organizations, co-location with other public entities, or other means.

2. Provide Physically Accessible Office Space

Each local child support agency shall ensure that office space is accessible to persons with disabilities. The physical plant and office arrangement should ensure that there are no impediments to physical access for staff and customers, including individuals with disabilities.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency exit interviews do not indicate problems with office location.
- Local agency receives no complaints regarding physical accessibility.

Compliance Measures:

- Meets physical accessibility standards required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Authority:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- DCSS proposed customer service and civil rights regulations.

AS.6.2 Maintain Optimal Office Design

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency maintains office space designed to meet the needs of staff and support the work to be performed. Office space should be professionally structured to support staff in the conduct of their work and optimize workflow.

Standard:

AS.6.2 The local child support agency promotes optimal office design to enhance worker efficiency, effectiveness, health, safety and comfort.

Tasks:

1. Design study to support workflow

Each local child support agency shall promote use of optimal office design to enhance worker health, safety and productivity. Factors to consider include, but may not be limited to: furnishings that promote worker health and reduce redundancy; equipment that is up to date and appropriate for the type, quantity and quality of work desired; ergonomic design and office layout that promotes optimum workflow; health and safety; and comfort.

2. Office Space Appropriate for Use

Each local child support agency shall ensure that office space is appropriate and optimally designed for its intended use. For example, interview rooms should promote privacy while maintaining safety. Further, state hearing rooms should promote effective conduct of the hearing process while meeting security guidelines. Environmental design of office space is an important contributor to worker satisfaction and productivity.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency promotes optimal office design.
- Number of injuries and claims for worker's compensation are limited or reduced.

Compliance Measures:

- Work environment evaluated for workflow and safety considerations.

Authority:

AS.6.3 Maintain Healthy and Safe Environment

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency promotes a physical environment that is healthy, safe and secure. This includes assessing the workplace environment and implementing procedures and plans to mitigate or deal with potential health concerns, threats or emergencies. Plans shall address staff training and designating individuals to respond in crisis situations.

Standard:

AS.6.3 The local child support agency promotes the health, safety and security of its employees.

Tasks:

1. Assess Environment for Hazards

Each local child support agency shall conduct an assessment of the office environment to identify potential health and safety hazards, and develop related removal or mitigation plans. Periodic reassessments of the environment should be routinely conducted.

2. Implement Safety Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement a Safety Plan including procedures for early identification of safety issues, the conduct of safety programs to prevent injuries, and early removal or mitigation of identified problems. Local agencies shall consider designation or appointment of a Safety Coordinator and an Employee Safety Committee to assist in its effort to maintain a healthy and safe environment.

3. Maintain Disaster and Evacuation Plans

Each local child support agency shall develop and maintain Disaster and Evacuation Plans to be implemented in the event of an emergency. Initial and refresher training shall be conducted for all employees.

4. Conduct Fire Safety Inspections

Each local child support agency shall ensure that routine fire safety inspections are conducted as required and/or appropriate.

5. Institute Personal Safety Measures

Each local child support agency shall assess the environment and have in place policies and procedures to protect staff from hostile persons. In addition to optimal office design providing appropriate architectural and space barriers, local agencies shall determine other necessary measures. Other measures may include employment of security officers, development and implementation of hostile behavior policies and procedures, and emergency response protocols.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency assesses the environment for health and safety hazards and timely implements corrective or mitigation measures.

- Number of injuries and claims for worker's compensation are limited or reduced.

Compliance Measures:

- Required safety inspections are conducted.
- Required health or safety plans are in place.
- Required disaster and evacuation plans are in place.
- Required fire safety inspections conducted.
- Personal safety measures are in place.

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
AS.6 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

AS.6.1 Maintain Office Accessibility

AS.6.2 Maintain Optimal Office Design

AS.6.3 Maintain Healthy and Safe Environment

CHAPTER 8 IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

This chapter addresses Improving Organizational Performance using the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) structure and processes. The QAPI Manual in its entirety is intended to: (a) document the work of the child support program business; (b) provide a structure through which to analyze and compare performance; (c) provide a structure through which to identify, plan and target performance improvement actions; (d) provide a structure to identify best practices, research and other information to assist in achieving performance improvements; and (e) provide a structure and approach for continuous evaluation and performance improvement. The focus of this chapter is to bring together the structure and tools necessary to implement the QAPI program.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies are committed to maximizing the performance of California's child support program statewide. To do this requires a planned, coordinated, and uniform statewide approach to performance improvement. Together DCSS and local agencies have developed the QAPI program to provide the structure, approach and tools necessary to focus efforts statewide on performance improvement.

The foundation for the QAPI program is documentation of the work, or the essential business and business processes, of the child support program. The QAPI Manual provides this foundation by capturing the entire scope of work performed by local child support agencies. The work is documented in descending order of specificity, beginning with the broadest groupings of work, defined as performance areas, followed by functions, elements, and tasks. This work breakdown structure (WBS) intentionally captures the work of the child support program at a high level; the QAPI Manual is not an operations manual. The intent is to provide a structured and uniform view of the child support business and business processes, thereby enabling use of a common frame of reference as the basis through which to assess and improve performance.

Creating a shared statewide view of the work enables DCSS and local agencies to focus their efforts, at a statewide and local agency level, on performance improvement. The QAPI program provides a statewide structure and approach to performance review, evaluation and improvement. The structure enables performance monitoring through two primary methods: (a) collection, analysis, and comparison of standard data sets; and (b) quality assurance reviews in targeted work areas. The use of standard data sets enables identification of specific work areas in which performance does not meet commonly accepted levels, i.e., using comparative data to set performance benchmarks and/or tolerance bands. The quality review process enables routine, ongoing review of essential business processes to determine work levels, accuracy, and outcomes. These performance review processes permit targeted identification of problem areas in which action plans are needed to correct or otherwise improve performance.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

To further structure and target statewide performance improvement efforts, DCSS and local agencies have begun to identify essential work or business processes that, if performed well, increase the likelihood of achieving desired performance outcomes. It is recognized that it is not possible to give focused attention to all work to be performed; therefore, efforts must be strategically focused to achieve key performance outcomes. As a starting point, the QAPI process begins to identify work (functions, elements and tasks) and the relationship to achievement on the five federal performance measures. In the future, this will be further refined to include other state performance measures. The QAPI process uses three levels to denote the strength of a relationship between the work and a measure. The levels are: Level 1-directly linked; Level 2-secondarily linked; and Level 3-indirectly linked. The intent is to enable DCSS and local agencies to focus on those work areas that have the greatest opportunity to improve performance on the federal measures and meet state performance goals.

Additionally, the QAPI program provides a structure through which to identify best practices, relevant research, and innovations to assist leaders in achieving performance improvements. A key component of the QAPI program is the focus on identifying and sharing information about what works. A Best Practices section is reserved after each functional area to capture the experiences of practitioners that are getting good results. The QAPI work breakdown structure permits identification of these practices and innovations by work grouping; thus providing an invaluable technical assistance tool for those seeking information on how to improve performance in a given area.

Finally, the QAPI program provides a framework for statewide collaboration and partnership to improve statewide performance of California's child support program. The QAPI program is founded on the belief that state and local agencies share a mutual responsibility to improve program performance statewide. While local leaders must necessarily focus on the performance of their own organizations, they must also actively participate in sharing what works and assisting others in their performance improvement efforts. The QAPI program includes a local agency organizational assessment process using state and local agency peer review teams. The peer review process is intended to enhance the dialogue between local agencies and the commitment to success of the program statewide.

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies believe that the QAPI program enables a coordinated statewide approach to management of California's child support program. Using a common frame of reference state and local leaders, managers and staff can similarly focus attention on the work to be performed, identifying and targeting those areas not meeting performance expectations. The DCSS and local agencies are committed to using the QAPI program to manage California's child support program to achieve optimal performance results.

This chapter has four functional areas: QAPI Structure and Process, Management Information, Quality and Risk Management, and Oversight and Technical Assistance.

IOP.1 QAPI Structure and Process

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize and value the importance of routine, ongoing review and evaluation of work processes and outcomes to improving performance of the child support program. The DCSS and local agencies have designed the QAPI program to provide the statewide structure and approach to managing performance improvement both locally and statewide. Each local agency is committed to developing a performance improvement structure and process that meets the intent of the QAPI program, while permitting local flexibility in detailed design and operation.

Further, DCSS and local child support agencies recognize the significant contribution that each makes to the overall success of the child support program. Through the strategic planning process, annual performance goals, objectives and measures are established. These statewide performance expectations are translated into individual local agency performance agreements. It is recognized that the performance of each local agency is critical to improving the overall performance of the child support program statewide. The DCSS and local child support agencies are committed to achieving performance goals and objectives resulting in increased self-sufficiency of families and maximized support for children.

IOP.1.1 Establish Local Agency Performance Targets

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has clearly articulated performance goals, objectives and measures. The DCSS, in collaboration with local child support agencies and stakeholders, developed a strategic plan for California's child support program. The strategic plan establishes statewide performance goals, objectives, and measures through FFY 2005. Local agency performance objectives that support the statewide objectives are negotiated with DCSS and reflected in annual performance agreements included within Plans of Cooperation. Each local agency shall use a strategic planning process that incorporates the QAPI process to identify performance goals and objectives for incorporation in the annual performance agreement with DCSS.

Standard:

IOP.1.1 The local child support agency has performance targets that are incorporated in their annual QAPI Plan and Plan of Cooperation with DCSS.

Tasks:

1. Conduct Strategic Planning Process

Each local child support agency shall conduct a strategic planning process to establish performance goals, objectives and measures for the coming FFY (refer to strategic planning in Chapter 3, Leadership and Organization.) Strategic planning shall be conducted within the context of the statewide child support program strategic plan. The statewide strategic plan provides program-wide goals and objectives. Each local agency shall conduct a strategic planning process, involving staff, customers and stakeholders, to identify its specific performance goals, objectives and measures, consistent with the statewide strategic plan.

The QAPI program provides the structure and process for each local agency to use in determining aggressive but attainable annual performance expectations. The QAPI program enables identification of potential performance improvement areas through use of: (a) a structured review of the work of the child support program using the QAPI Manual; (b) shared data elements and reports as well as DCSS comparative data and benchmarks against which to assess individual performance; and (c) best practice, innovation and research information to assist in developing performance improvement strategies and action plans. The QAPI program enables local agencies to better assess their current performance, determine aggressive but attainable performance goals and objectives, and develop performance improvement plans.

2. Establish Performance Targets

Each local child support agency shall use information resulting from the QAPI structure and process to develop their proposed performance goals and objectives for the coming FFY. Local agency performance goals and objectives shall be consistent with those in the statewide child support program strategic plan. A process of review, based on QAPI

program performance information, will be used as the basis for DCSS and each local agency discussion and agreement on final performance improvement targets.

3. Incorporate Final Performance Targets

Each local child support agency shall reflect their final performance goals and objectives in their annual QAPI Plan, delineating specific strategies and action plans to achieve the performance targets. In addition, the performance objectives will be incorporated into the Plan of Cooperation between DCSS and each local agency.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency uses QAPI information in its strategic planning process to set aggressive but attainable performance targets.
- Local agency performance targets are consistent with statewide child support program strategic plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Final performance targets are reflected in QAPI Plan and Plan of Cooperation.

Authority:

IOP.1.2 Establish QAPI Structure

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a QAPI structure that meets statewide QAPI program requirements. Each local agency shall determine how to operate the QAPI program structure and process within their local operating environment. While providing a statewide structure and approach to manage and focus performance improvement efforts, the QAPI function must work effectively within the local agency environment. Local agency leaders shall determine how to implement the QAPI structure and meet the purposes of the QAPI program.

The quality assurance and performance improvement structure shall enable: (a) setting clear performance goals, objectives, and measures; (b) routine monitoring of program performance using standard data sets and other management information; (c) periodic, structured review of compliance, data reliability, and selected business processes; and (d) development and implementation of specific action plans to improve performance in targeted areas.

Standard:

IOP.1.2 The local child support agency has a quality assurance and performance improvement structure that meets the purposes of the QAPI program.

Tasks:

1. Establish QAPI Organization

Each local child support agency shall establish a QAPI organizational structure to oversee, manage, and/or perform the functions of the QAPI program. While most local agencies will assign responsibility to an organizational entity, smaller agencies may designate a line manager(s). Regardless of the organizational specifics, each local agency shall have a clearly established QAPI program and structure through which to manage their agency's performance.

2. Determine Organizational Placement

Each local child support agency shall appropriately place the QAPI function within its agency to ensure necessary visibility, authority, and responsibility to effectively manage, oversee and/or perform the functions of the QAPI program.

3. Define Internal Operating Plan

Each local child support agency shall establish an operating plan for the QAPI program that includes, but may not be limited to: clear and unambiguous authority; policies and procedures; roles and responsibilities of the QAPI function; and delineation of roles, responsibilities, and relationships between the QAPI function and other organizational units. The QAPI program structure and operating plan also shall be incorporated within each local agency's annual QAPI Plan.

4. Allocate Sufficient Resources

Each local child support agency shall allocate sufficient resources to operate the QAPI function including staff (in sufficient number and with necessary critical skills), office space, equipment, and materials. The DCSS allocated funding through the annual budget allocation process, beginning in SFY 2001-02, to build and/or enhance capacity to meet the QAPI program requirements. Specifically the funding was targeted for use in establishing the QAPI function and structure including, but not limited to, building capacity through additional staff resources, skill building, and developing a structured approach to collection and analysis of routine management data.

5. Select QAPI Staff

Each local child support agency shall establish and select designated QAPI staff with necessary critical skills to oversee, manage and/or perform the functions of the QAPI program. Most local agencies will have staff dedicated to the QAPI function; however, smaller local agencies may use staff that also performs other functions. Local agencies shall appoint staff with the critical skills necessary to be effective, including at least journey-level experience, understanding of the child support program, demonstrated interest in quality assurance and performance improvement, and strong inter-personal skills.

6. Promote Staff Involvement

Each local child support agency shall promote the involvement of all staff in advancing quality and achieving optimal program performance. Providing quality child support service is the responsibility of all local agency staff. While most local agencies will establish a dedicated QAPI organizational unit, it is critical that all staff be knowledgeable about and involved in achieving quality and performance objectives. Further, each staff member should understand how their job is related to, or impacts, the achievement of individual performance objectives. All staff also should have opportunities to provide input.

Opportunities for staff involvement in QAPI functions include, but are not limited to: using multi-disciplinary or organization-wide teams; expanding team lead and/or membership on performance improvement and/or corrective action teams; participating as case sampling reviewers; and participating as subject matter experts in business process analysis and/or re-engineering. The quality assurance and performance improvement program should have an organization-wide approach.

7. Communicate QAPI Results

Each local child support agency shall routinely communicate about the QAPI program and its performance results to staff, customers and stakeholders. The DCSS will develop statewide materials on the QAPI program; however, local agencies should provide information tailored to their specific quality assurance and performance activities. Further, local agencies should encourage ongoing participation and involvement of customers and stakeholders in the local QAPI structure and processes.

Performance Measures:

- Organizational placement of the QAPI function is consistent with the purposed of the program.
- The local agency director champions quality assurance and performance improvement and fully involves all staff.
- Local agency QAPI structure has sufficient resources, including staff in term of number and critical skills.
- Local agency routinely communicates about the QAPI program and its performance results to staff, customers and stakeholders.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency has QAPI function and structure.
- Local agency has a QAPI operating plan; it is incorporated in its annual QAPI Plan.
- Local agency uses funding allocated for QAPI for this function.

Authority:

- DCSS allocation letters beginning with SFY 2001-02 dated September 13, 2001, and subsequent allocation letters for SFY 2002-03.

IOP.1.3 Establish QAPI Process

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency has a QAPI process that meets statewide QAPI program requirements. Each local agency shall determine how to operate the QAPI program process within their local operating environment. While providing a statewide structure and approach to manage and focus performance improvement efforts, QAPI processes must work effectively within the local agency environment. The local agency director shall determine how to implement the QAPI process and meet the purposes of the QAPI program.

The QAPI process shall reflect continuous quality improvement (CQI) principles and approaches including: (a) planning; (b) implementing; (c) monitoring and reviewing outcomes; (d) identifying improvement areas; (e) developing and implementing necessary performance improvement and/or corrective action plans; and, (f) continuing the process through ongoing monitoring and reassessment of outcomes.

Standard:

IOP.1.3 The local child support agency has quality assurance and performance improvement processes that meet the purposes of the QAPI program.

Tasks:

1. Establish Performance Plan

Each local child support agency shall use the statewide QAPI program framework to assess its performance and establish an annual performance plan. The QAPI structure enables: (a) routine monitoring of performance; (b) use of DCSS comparative data to assist in identifying potential performance improvement areas; and (c) use of best practice and research information to assist in developing performance improvement strategies and action plans. Using the QAPI program structure enables local agencies to better assess their current performance, establish workload priorities, set aggressive but attainable performance objectives, and develop performance plans including detailed strategies and action plans to achieve performance objectives. Local agency performance plans shall be incorporated within their annual QAPI Plan and POC with DCSS.

2. Implement Performance Strategies

Each local child support agency shall implement the detailed strategies and action plans identified in annual performance plans as necessary to achieve performance objectives. It is expected that local agency will carefully design and implement targeted strategies and actions to meet their performance objectives. Generally accepted quality and risk management processes will be used to ensure that any changes to business processes occur using well-defined protocols.

3. Monitor Program Performance

Each local child support agency shall establish processes to continually monitor their performance. The QAPI Manual identifies performance measures for all performance

areas; the measures represent agreed upon indicators of program performance. Local agencies shall routinely monitor program performance using, but not limited to: (a) DCSS required data elements and standard reports; (b) local agency selected data elements and reports; and (c) ad hoc reports or other information deemed necessary by either DCSS and/or the local agency. In addition, local agencies shall assess DCSS quarterly comparative data reports for implications for their program performance. This information shall be used by each local agency as a means to monitor performance and identify areas requiring further review and/or action.

4. Select Targeted Performance Review Areas

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement QAPI processes that permit review of targeted performance areas. Local agencies shall identify areas for targeted review based on selection criteria that include, but may not limited to: (a) expected impact on performance—high versus low risk; (b) significance of new policy and/or directive; (c) significance of problem area identified through routine monitoring; (d) problem prone processes; (e) relationship to improvement on federal or state performance measures; and (f) resource availability. The intent is to permit local agencies to target detailed performance reviews in recognition that it is not possible to give focused attention to all work performed.

5. Conduct Required and Targeted Performance Reviews

Each local child support agency shall develop and/or implement processes for review of required and targeted performance areas. The DCSS will provide protocols for required quarterly case reviews of case processing compliance, federal data reliability, and special areas of review. Local agencies shall develop and use appropriate review methods and protocols in conducting performance reviews in other areas that they target. Review methods may include, but are not limited to: (a) case reviews; (b) structured review of data elements and related reports; (c) interviews of staff, customers, and/or other stakeholders; and (d) surveys of staff, customers, and/or other stakeholder. Regardless of the method used, each local agency shall have written protocols that address detailed review procedures, statistical accuracy levels, issues and/or questions to be determined or asked, and methods for data capturing, analyzing, and reporting findings.

6. Identify Performance Improvement Areas

Each local child support agency shall identify through routine performance monitoring and/or DCSS required or local agency targeted reviews, areas in which improvement and/or corrective action is needed. Identified performance issues or problems shall be well-documented and lead to development of performance and/or corrective action plan or other action as deemed necessary. The disposition of each issue or problem shall be documented.

7. Develop Performance Improvement/Corrective Action Plans

Each local child support agency shall develop performance improvement and/or corrective action plans to improve and/or remedy identified performance problems. Local agencies shall establish a protocol to be followed in developing and executing

performance improvement and/or corrective action plans. The protocol shall include, but may not be limited to: (a) methods to conduct issue or problem analyses to identify root causes leading to the identified problem; (b) methods to develop necessary performance improvement and/or corrective action plans; and (c) contents of corrective action plans including person(s) responsible, specific actions to be taken, and timeframes for completion. The performance improvement and/or corrective action process requires ongoing monitoring and review until the local agency is assured of completion of the plan and achievement of the desired outcomes.

8. Maintain Continuous Quality/Performance Improvement Process

Each local child support agency shall adhere to continuous quality and performance improvement principles and approaches consistent with the purposed of the QAPI program as outlined above.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has performance plan that includes detailed strategies and action plans to achieve performance objectives.
- Local agency monitors program performance on an ongoing basis using standard and optional data elements and DCSS quarterly comparative data reports.
- Local agency selects and conducts targeted performance reviews in areas deemed appropriate.
- Local agency timely identifies and accurately assesses performance problems.
- Local agency takes timely action to resolve identified problems and improve performance.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency performance incorporated in annual QAPI Plan and POC with DCSS.
- Written documentation describing QAPI process.
- Local agency has selection criteria to identify optional targeted review areas.
- Local agency conducts required compliance case processing reviews.
- Local agency conducts required data reliability case reviews.
- Local agency conducts other special reviews required by DCSS.

Authority:

IOP.1.4 Conduct Required Quarterly Case Reviews

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency conducts required quarterly case processing reviews. The QAPI program integrates existing program compliance, data reliability audits, and oversight reviews requirements into a single performance-based system. Consistent with continuous quality improvement principles and approaches, the QAPI program will incorporate use of routine case sampling to validate compliance with case processing timeframes and data accuracy and reliability requirements. Local agencies also may use case sampling to validate performance in selected targeted areas. Each local child support agency shall implement DCSS required quarterly case sample reviews within their QAPI processes.

Standards:

IOP.1.4

The local child support agency conducts required quarterly case sample reviews to determine program compliance and data reliability.

The local child support agency timely implements corrective actions based on the outcome of DCSS required quarterly case sample reviews.

Tasks:

1. Select Appropriate Case Sample

Each local child support agency shall implement required case sampling procedures necessary to select a statistically valid and representative sample size. The DCSS will prescribe minimum case sampling requirements for each local child support agency. Further, DCSS will work through the PRISM Advisory Group and Requirements Analysis Workgroup to implement consistent and uniform sampling techniques statewide. The DCSS will require case reviews quarterly; however, the ability to pull more frequent samples will be developed if determined appropriate.

2. Review Case Processing Compliance

Each local child support agency shall conduct quarterly reviews of case processing compliance. The reviews will reflect federal and state case processing compliance requirements; essentially the same requirements currently reviewed annually through annual compliance reviews.

3. Review Data Reliability Compliance

Each local child support agency shall conduct quarterly review of cases to determine data reliability. The review requirements will reflect federal data reliability audit protocols and requirements.

4. Review Special Areas Determined by DCSS

Each local child support agency shall conduct additional reviews in targeted areas as determined necessary by DCSS. These special reviews will be limited and to the extent possible, will be incorporated within the case processing compliance and/or data

reliability audit protocols. Generally, special areas of review will address implementation of recent statewide regulatory or policy directives. For example, special areas of review may include, but are not limited to, implementation of: case closure policy; case transfer policy; and local complaint resolution and state hearing processes. Additional review questions relative to case closure were included in the 2002 compliance review process for calendar year 2001.

5. (Optional) Review Special Areas Determined by Local Agency

Each local child support agency shall select as it determines appropriate special areas of review that lend themselves to use of case sample and review techniques. These reviews may be implemented as determined necessary and appropriate by the local agency.

6. Develop and Implement Corrective Action Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement corrective action plans based on problems or issues identified through the DCSS required quarterly case reviews. Corrective action plans should adhere to local agency established protocols and procedures. In addition, DCSS will directly monitor and may participate in local agency corrective action planning and implementation in these areas.

7. Reassess Case Review Findings

Each local child support agency shall reassess case processing and data reliability compliance upon implementation of necessary corrective actions. The continuous quality improvement process will continue until the identified problem(s) are fully remedied.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency implements corrective action plans necessary to fully correct any identified compliance, reliability or performance problems.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency conducts required compliance case processing reviews.
- Local agency conducts required data reliability case reviews.
- Local agency conducts other special reviews required by DCSS.

Authority:

IOP.1.5 Develop and Implement Annual QAPI Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop and implement an annual QAPI plan. Each local agency's QAPI Plan shall include a description of its QAPI program and annual performance improvement plan. Local agency performance targets included in the QAPI Plan shall be consistent with those reflected in its POC with DCSS.

Standards:

IOP.1.5 The local child support agency has an annual QAPI Plan that meets QAPI program requirements.

Tasks:

1. Develop Annual QAPI Plan

Each local child support agency shall develop an annual QAPI Plan that: (a) describes its QAPI function including the detailed structure and operating processes and; (b) incorporates its annual performance improvement plan including performance goals and objectives as well as detailed strategies and action plans to meet performance targets.

2. Implement Annual QAPI Plan

Each local child support agency shall implement its annual QAPI Plan including establishing and maintaining the QAPI structure and processes, conducting required case sample reviews and other quality assurance processes, and detailed strategies and action plans to achieve performance targets.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely develops and implements annual QAPI Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency has annual QAPI Plan that meets QAPI program requirements.

Authority:

BEST PRACTICES
IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE
IOP.1 QAPI STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

IOP.1.1 Establish Local Agency Performance Targets

IOP.1.2 Establish QAPI Structure

IOP.1.3 Establish QAPI Process

IOP.1.4 Conduct Required Quarterly Case Reviews

IOP.1.5 Develop and Implement Annual QAPI Plan

IOP.2 Management Information

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize and value the use of research and data in monitoring and evaluating performance of the child support program. Management information consisting of relevant data indicative of performance, along with research, best practices, and innovations, provides the basis for effective state and local planning, monitoring, and quality assurance and performance improvement activities. The QAPI Manual identifies standards for performance and related measures, that represent agreed upon indicators of performance, for all performance areas.

The DCSS and local agencies further recognize that to begin they will not be able to collect, aggregate and analyze data for all identified performance measures. Current data are both automated and manually generated and, for some data elements, differ in definition. Some of the identified performance measures are discrete data elements known and currently collected through interim automation systems, others are collected by some interim automation systems, and others may be collected manually by some local agencies or not at all. It is important to ensure that data elements selected and used meet necessary reliability and accuracy requirements to permit comparability statewide.

Therefore, the QAPI Program will start by carefully selecting the scope and focus of data collection activities. Data collection and reporting will include: (a) standard data elements and reports implemented statewide; (b) optional data elements and reports selected and implemented by local agencies; (c) ad hoc reporting capability for selected data elements implemented as deemed appropriate statewide or by a local agency or agencies; and (d) comparative data and reports prepared quarterly by DCSS for use by local agencies in assessing or benchmarking their performance and/or identifying areas for potential improvement. In addition, best practices, innovations, research and other useful information or data identified by DCSS and/or local agencies will be collected and incorporated in the QAPI Manual to assist local agencies in performance improvement efforts.

The DCSS and local agencies believe that performance monitoring through collection, analysis, and comparison of standard data sets is the foundation of performance improvement activities. The use of standard data sets enables identification of specific work areas in which performance does not meet commonly accepted levels, i.e., using comparative data to set performance benchmarks and/or tolerance bands. Data collection and analysis enables targeted identification of problem areas in which action plans are needed to correct or otherwise improve performance—the goal of the QAPI Program.

IOP.2.1 Select Data Elements

The intent of this functional element is to select required and optional data elements that measure performance and enable ongoing monitoring of performance by DCSS and each local child support agency. The DCSS will establish a required set of standard data elements used statewide; other data elements will be identified for use by each local agency. The DCSS and local agencies will collaborate in establishing the initially required standard data set for use statewide in monitoring performance. Each local agency will determine its individual management information needs and establish optional data sets.

Standard:

IOP.2.1 The local child support agency has standard and optional data sets to enable ongoing monitoring of performance.

Tasks:

1. Identify Data Elements

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall identify those data elements that will comprise the required standard data set. To begin, it is expected that existing required federal and state reports will be a large part of the standard data set. These reports include the CS 157/457, CS 34/35, CS 396/356 and CS 921. It is also expected that other priority data elements will be identified for inclusion in the initial standard data set. However, it is unlikely that data elements for all functions and performance standards identified in the QAPI Manual will be represented initially.

Each local child support agency shall also identify additional optional data elements that it determines necessary to effectively monitor its performance.

2. Define Data Elements

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall establish uniform definitions for each of the data elements included in the required standard data set. Federal data reliability and related requirements prescribe exact definitions for many data elements, i.e., those included in the CS 157, CS 34 and CS 396. In fact, the DCSS and PRISM Advisory Group expend significant effort to achieve precise uniformity in data definitions for interim automated systems. It is expected that some of the selected standard data elements will require similar efforts to achieve precise uniform definitions. However, this may not be necessary for other data elements where substantially similar, but not exact, definitions between local agencies may be acceptable.

Each local child support agency shall also define data elements selected for optional data sets. Optional data sets will be defined, collected and maintained by the local agency. Local agencies may want to share optional data sets as best practices.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency identifies and establishes optional data sets.

Compliance Measures:

- Standard and optional data elements are identified and defined.
- Local agency adheres to required data definitions for standard data elements.

Authority:

IOP.2.2 Collect and Submit Data

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency collects and submits required standard data elements used statewide to monitor performance. The standard data elements will be collected by each local agency and submitted to DCSS. The DCSS will use the standard data to monitor individual local agency performance and program performance statewide. In addition, each local agency shall determine their own requirements for collection of optional data elements.

Standard:

IOP.2.2 The local child support agency collects and submits standard data elements as required by DCSS.

Tasks:

1. Determine Data Collection Protocol

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall determine the appropriate protocol for collection of standard data elements, including whether data collection should be automated or manual. Each selected data element shall be reviewed to determine the appropriate method of collection. In addition, each local agency shall similarly determine the protocol for collection of optional data elements.

2. Conduct Data Mapping

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall conduct necessary data mapping to ensure collection of data meeting appropriate reliability and accuracy requirements. It is once again important to note that all data elements may not need to be precisely defined and mapped in order to be useful in performance monitoring. Nevertheless, regardless of the agreed upon data reliability and accuracy requirements, it will be necessary to appropriately map required data elements to data sources.

3. Assess Impact on Interim Automation Systems

Each consortium lead agency shall participate with DCSS in assessing the impact on interim automation systems to collect identified standard and optional data sets. This analysis will include, but may not be limited to: (a) review of existing system data elements and definitions; (b) determination of which systems have which data elements; (c) identification of which systems have significantly similar required data elements; and (d) assessment of automated system changes needed. This analysis will be considered in final decision-making on data element selection and collection protocols.

4. Secure Interim Automation System Changes

The DCSS in collaboration with consortia lead agencies will seek approval for interim system modifications, as determined appropriate, to enable collection of necessary performance data. At this time, the impact on interim systems is unknown. However, as standard and optional data sets are defined and management information needs become further refined, it may be necessary to secure approvals for system modification.

5. Collect and Submit Data

Each local child support agency shall ensure timely collection of standard data elements in accordance with DCSS requirements. Local agencies shall collect data at specified frequencies to ensure availability of required standard data and information statewide. Generally, data should be collected at least monthly at the local agency level since more frequent data points better support trending and monitoring continuous process improvement. However, to begin, it is expected that local agencies will be required to submit standard data elements to DCSS quarterly.

Performance Measures:

- Necessary interim automation system modifications are identified.
- Local agency collects required and optional data sets.
- Local agency monitors data for reliability and institutes corrective action to remedy any unreliable data.
- Local agency timely submits standard data sets to DCSS.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency adheres to DCSS requirements for collection and submission of standard data sets.

Authority:

IOP.2.3 Provide Management Reports

The intent of this functional element is to enable each local child support agency to use standard data in assessing its performance and/or identifying areas for potential improvement. The DCSS will use the required data elements submitted by local agencies to provide standard management reports quarterly. In addition, DCSS will also provide quarterly management reports reflecting the performance of other states on selected data elements. Together these management reports will enable each local agency to assess its performance in contrast to performance benchmarks, i.e., other comparable organizations and performance standards delineated in the QAPI Manual. Other data reporting capabilities are also envisioned.

Standard:

IOP.2.3 The DCSS and local child support agency provides management reports to assess its performance and identify areas for potential performance improvement.

Tasks:

1. Produce California Comparative Data Reports

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall design and provide quarterly standard reports on the performance of local child support agencies statewide. The reports will display by caseload size the required data elements collected by each local agency and submitted to DCSS. It is expected that the reports will include data on caseload, performance on state and federal measures, collections, and other standard data elements. The reports will enable assessment of individual local agency performance on selected data elements in comparison to other local agencies, statewide averages, and performance standards. The intent is to provide standard management reports that will be used at the state and local agency levels to monitor performance and identify areas for targeted performance improvement efforts.

2. Produce National Comparative Data Reports

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall design and provide quarterly standard reports on the performance of other states nationwide. The reports will display by caseload size or other appropriate sorting, and to the extent possible, the same required data element collected by local agencies within California. The reports will enable assessment of individual local agency performance on selected data elements in comparison to other organizations and performance standards. The intent is to provide standard management reports that will be used at the state and local agency levels to enable additional contrasts and comparisons leading to identification of potential areas for performance improvement.

It is recognized that some of the national data may not be readily available since it may not be collected and/or may only be collected less frequently than annually. The DCSS intends to establish necessary processes to periodically survey other states to collect necessary data.

3. Design and Produce Optional Reports

Each local child support agency shall design and produce optional local level reports necessary to manage performance. Local reports may include, but are not limited to detailed operating data such as call center metrics, customer appointment scheduling, case processing by functional area, and other items. It is expected that local agency level reports also will permit review of data and performance to the unit and individual staff member levels.

4. Develop Ad Hoc Reporting Capability

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall develop an ad hoc reporting capability to address the needs of state and local agency managers for additional timely and responsive management information. The DCSS is exploring possible ways through which to provide this reporting capability. It is envisioned that an ad hoc reporting capability would permit state and local managers to produce non-standard, timely and focused information by posing what if questions or other selected data inquiries.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency has necessary optional data reports.

Compliance Measures:

- Standard, optional and ad hoc management reports are produced.

Authority:

IOP.2.4 Analyze and Use Data

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency systematically analyzes data on an ongoing basis to monitor performance and identify targeted areas for performance improvement. Each local agency shall analyze standard and optional data reports for meaningful management information that can assist in focusing quality and performance improvement efforts. The structured review of performance data and indicators provides the basis to take continual action to resolve identified issues and improve services.

Standard:

IOP.2.4 The local child support agency routinely and systematically analyzes data and takes action to improve services based on this analysis.

Tasks:

1. Develop Data Analysis Protocol

Each local child support agency shall establish a protocol for ongoing systematic analysis of data to provide meaningful management information. The data analyses may be conducted on an organization-wide basis and/or for specific functions or activities. It is critically important that routine analyses be conducted according to established protocols that include: assigning responsibility for completion of analyses; agreed upon displays and formats for useful presentation of data; timeframes for conducting analyses; analytical methods and processes; and how the analyses will be shared and distributed.

2. Develop Tools for Data Analysis

Each local child support agency shall develop and utilize data analysis techniques to support performance monitoring, performance improvement actions, and management decision-making. Data analysis may include, but is not limited to: analysis of trends; control and comparison charts; summary of statistical outliers; and comparison with other relevant data points and DCSS benchmark data. Each local agency shall select and employ appropriate tools for data analysis.

3. Compare Performance to Benchmarks

Each local child support agency shall assess its performance over time in contrast with comparative benchmark data. Local agency performance should be assessed from at least three perspectives: (a) comparison of its own performance internally over time; (b) comparison of its performance with that of similar local agencies or organizations; and (c) comparison of its performance with standards established through the QAPI program. These comparisons to benchmark data are extremely useful in monitoring performance over time by enabling identification of excessive variability or unacceptable levels of performance in specific areas or processes or in overall performance.

4. Monitor Performance

Local agencies shall routinely monitor program performance using, but not limited to: (a) DCSS required statewide data elements and standard reports; (b) local agency selected data elements and reports; (c) ad hoc reports or other information deemed necessary by either DCSS and/or the local agency; and (d) DCSS quarterly national comparative data reports. These data reports shall be used by each local agency to monitor performance and identify areas requiring further review and/or action.

5. Take Appropriate Action Based on Data Analysis

Each local child support agency shall take appropriate action based on data analysis and identification of undesirable trends in performance. Trends may be undesirable if they show sub-standard performance, or vary from past patterns and expected outcomes, the performance of other agencies, or recognized standards. Appropriate follow-up actions may include, but are not limited to: (a) conducting further analysis; (b) modifying work processes; and/or (c) engaging in significant business process re-engineering.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency conducts structure reviews of performance data and takes continual action to resolve identified issues and improve services.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency has data analysis protocols and tools.
- Local agency compares performance to benchmarks.

Authority:

IOP.2.5 Use Best Practices, Innovations and Research

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency considers and appropriately incorporates best practices, innovations and research in designing performance improvement approaches and actions. Data analysis permits identification of targeted areas in which performance improvement is needed based on comparison to benchmark data. An important related step is to determine what works and how others are able to achieve desired performance outcomes. Identification of these best practices enables the performance improvement process.

Standard:

IOP.2.5 The local child support agency uses best practices, innovations and research data in designing business processes and performance improvement efforts.

Tasks:

1. Develop Structured Process to Capture Best Practices

The DCSS and local child support agencies shall continually seek to identify best practices, innovations, and research information that can assist in designing performance improvement strategies and approaches. The DCSS will establish a structured process for identification and dissemination of best practices and related useful information and data.

2. Incorporate Best Practices in Performance Improvement

Each local child support agency shall actively consider and incorporate as appropriate best practice, innovations, and research information in designing performance improvement strategies. Identifying and using what works for others in achieving desired performance outcomes is encouraged. Identification of these best practices enables the performance improvement process.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency uses and integrates best practices, innovations, and research in designing performance improvement efforts.

Compliance Measures:

- Structured process to capture best practices, innovations and research in place.

Authority:

IOP.2.6 Refine Performance Measurement System

The intent of this functional element is to ensure continual refinement of the performance measurement system to further illuminate and focus performance efforts. It is recognized that more performance improvement opportunities will be identified than can be act upon. Therefore, it is critically important that priorities be set using agreed upon criteria and methods.

Overtime, DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies intends to refine the performance measurement system to enable greater precision in establishing performance improvement priorities based on likely impacts to performance outcomes.

Standard:

IOP.2.6 The local child support agency establishes priorities for performance improvement efforts based on informed decision-making and priority setting.

Tasks:

1. Use Informed Decision-Making to Set Priorities for Performance Improvement

Each local child support agency shall use informed decision-making to establish its priorities in targeting performance improvement efforts. Most agencies will identify more potential areas for improvement than can be reasonably and effectively carried out. Therefore, local agencies shall establish priorities using criteria that include, but may not be limited to: expected impact on performance; high-risk, high impact, high-volume or problem prone processes; relationship of the potential improvement to outcomes on key performance measures; and the organization's resources.

2. Rank Performance Measures

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall continue to develop a ranking system to define the relationship of lower level performance measures to the likelihood of achieving high performance on federal and state level program performance measures. The QAPI Program has begun this process by attempting to drill down the federal performance measures by identifying the work that needs to be performed in order to achieve better outcomes on the federal measures. The QAPI Manual provides the structure for this effort by illuminating the work of the child support program (by performance areas, functions, elements and tasks) and assigning related performance and compliance measures. It is the relationship of the work and these lower level measures that DCSS is attempting to define; thereby enabling local agencies to focus their efforts on work that has the greatest impact on federal and state level performance measures.

The performance measure ranking system that DCSS is initially envisioning uses three levels to denote the strength of a relationship between the work/lower level measure and a federal measure. The levels are: Level 1-directly linked; Level 2-secondarily linked; and Level 3-indirectly linked. The intent is to enable DCSS and local agencies to focus on those work areas that have the greatest opportunity to improve performance

on the federal measures and meet state performance goals. In the future, the ranking system will be further refined to include other state level performance measures.

3. Evaluate Interplay of Performance Measures

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall continue to evaluate the interplay of the federal performance measures. The DCSS has begun to assess how each of the individual federal measures relates to the others. It has become increasingly evident that high performance on one measure does not correlate to high performance on others. In fact, in some cases, high performance on one or more measures may impact negative performance on the other measures. The DCSS is committed to continue to evaluate the interplay of the federal performance measures and appropriately incorporate findings into performance improvement efforts.

4. Establish Data “Triggers”

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall continue to evaluate the use of performance “tolerance bands” and “triggers” to alert managers to areas not meeting acceptable performance levels. After gaining experience with the comparative data used by the QAPI program, DCSS will begin to establish “tolerance bands,” which will serve as “triggers” to prompt local agency review and action, as appropriate. Local agency action would be triggered because of its identification as an outlier on a given performance measure or measures. Again, the intent is to effectively use data to provide useful and increasingly targeted management information to monitor program performance.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency prioritizes performance improvement efforts based on established criteria.

Compliance Measures:

- Refine the performance measurement system to establish a measurement ranking system, data tolerance bands, and data triggers.
- Determine the interplay of federal performance measures.

Authority:

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IOP.2 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

IOP.2.1 Select Data Elements

IOP.2.2 Collect and Submit Data

IOP.2.3 Provide Management Reports

IOP.2.4 Analyze and Use Data

IOP.2.5 Use Best Practices, Innovations and Research

IOP.2.6 Refine Performance Measurement System

IOP.3 Quality and Risk Management

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize the importance of applying quality and risk management practices to the child support program business. Designing and implementing changes to the business process require careful planning and implementation strategies to ensure quality and reduce risk. The focus of the quality assurance and performance improvement process is based largely on changing business processes to achieve improved performance. Therefore, it is important that business process change, commonly referred to as business process re-engineering, is carried out skillfully and without disruption of service to customers.

The DCSS and local agencies recognize that the focus of the QAPI program is the business process, and business process re-engineering ensures that business processes work effectively to meet performance objectives. Therefore, DCSS and local agencies will give focused attention to ensuring that changes to the business process and business process re-engineering efforts are well planned and effectively executed.

IOP.3.1 Implement Business Process Changes

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency uses proven standards and practices in implementing new business processes or changes. Effective business process change leads to achievement of intended performance improvements and avoidance of unintended outcomes.

Standard:

IOP.3.1 The local child support agency uses business process change practices that ensure achievement of intended performance improvements.

Tasks:

1. Establish Protocol for Business Process Changes

Each local child support agency shall ensure that implementation of new or revised business processes is carefully planned and well designed to achieve the intended outcomes. Proven standards and practices include, but may not be limited to: effective analysis of current practices; careful design of new or business process changes; implementation planning that includes training and development of business process support tools; and monitoring and evaluation to determine whether desired outcomes are achieved and sustained. Effective implementation of performance improvement actions is key to achieving overall program success.

2. Establish Protocols for Implementation of New Policies and Procedures

Each local child support agency shall ensure that implementation of new or revised policies and procedures is carefully planned and well designed to achieve the intended outcomes. The child support program is highly rule driven and legally based making it subject to ever changing federal and state policies and procedures. Each local agency shall establish a clear protocol through which federal and state policy and procedure directives are implemented. Most local agencies use central organizational units to interpret and make operational these new policies and procedures. Regardless of the organizational design, each local agency shall establish this function and ensure that all policy and procedure directives are made uniformly and consistently operational throughout its organization.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency uses proven standards and practices in implementing new business processes or changes to the business process.
- Local agency effectively implements new policies and procedures throughout its organization.

Compliance Measures:

- Proven standards and practices in implementing new or modified business processes, policies and procedures are in place.

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Authority:

IOP.3.2 Employ Risk Management Principles

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency uses risk management principles and practices in selecting and managing performance improvements. In selecting performance improvement areas, special attention is given to processes that are known to be high-risk, high-volume, and problem-prone. Further, performance improvement efforts are managed to avoid or mitigate risk and/or disruption of services. Local agencies shall incorporate risk management principles and practices into their processes to identify performance improvement areas as well as business process redesign.

Standard:

IOP.3.2 The local child support agency uses risk management principles in selecting and managing performance improvements.

Tasks:

1. Use Risk Management Principles and Practices

Each local child support agency shall use risk management principles and practices in selecting and managing performance improvements. Risk management practices include, but may not be limited to: establishing processes to identify risks; developing a risk assessment process; evaluating and ranking risks by impact and likelihood of occurrence; developing and implementing risk mitigation strategies and; ongoing routine monitoring of risk areas.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency uses risk management principle and practices.

Compliance Measures:

Authority:

IOP.3.3 Self Report Exceptional Events (Risks)

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency identifies and reports events or occurrences that pose a risk to the continued operation of the program. Local agencies shall notify DCSS at any time there is an event or occurrence that has had or has the potential to significantly disrupt services. Events or occurrences refer to significant non-compliance with standards and guidelines, special incidents, or important changes in the organizational structure.

Standard:

IOP.3.3 The local child support agency has procedures to identify and prevent service disruptions, and timely reports exceptional events to DCSS.

Tasks:

1. Develop Risk Management Plans to Prevent Service Disruption

Each local child support agency shall identify significant risk events and develop appropriate risk avoidance and/or mitigation plans and strategies. Generally, risk management plans are developed in advance in areas that are more predictable, for example, job action or strike contingency plans. The need for other risk management plans may be identified through risk management practices and/or current or emerging circumstances. Each local agency shall develop appropriate risk management plans to avoid or mitigate possible service disruption.

2. Develop and Implement Policies and Procedures to Report Exceptional Events

Each local child support agency shall develop policies and procedures for identifying and reporting exceptional events to DCSS via assigned Regional Administrators. Exceptional events are defined by DCSS to include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Special incidents including serious injury to staff or customers; fire; civil or criminal actions including theft, embezzlement or other suspected misuse of financial or other local agency resources.
- Disruptions of service due to computer or other key service delivery functions.
- Significant increases in customer complaints and/or other expressions of dissatisfaction with services and/or other issues.
- Changes in key leadership or staff positions including the Director, key management team members, lead Ombudsperson, or other key designated positions.
- Significant personnel issues and/or actions likely to be raised to DCSS and/or receive public attention such as job actions, strikes, or other issues.

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- Change in office location, hours of operation and/or contact information including primary telephone numbers.
- Other local events that may impact the delivery or service to customers or otherwise disrupt normal operations.

Reportable events that are addressed through other specific policies and procedures such as press inquiries and Public Records Act requests, should be handled through as governed through those guidelines issued by DCSS.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency timely reports exceptional events to DCSS Regional Administrator.

Compliance Measures:

- Risk management techniques to avoid or mitigate disruption in service are in place.

Authority:

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IOP.3 QUALITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

IOP.3.1 Implement Business Process Changes

IOP.3.2 Employ Risk Management Principles

IOP.3.3 Self Report Exceptional Events (Risks)

IOP.4 QAPI Oversight and Technical Assistance

Context and Values:

The Department of Child Support Services and local child support agencies recognize and value the benefits of partnership and collaboration in a statewide approach to quality and performance improvement. Experience has shown that no single child support agency consistently excels in performing all of the work that comprises the child support program business. No state or individual local agencies can claim all around success. However, many individual child support agencies excel in one or more areas. The DCSS and local agencies believe that there is a great deal that can be learned from other agencies and from each other in how best to perform child support program business.

It is within this context and values that the QAPI oversight and technical assistance process will be performed. Each local agency will have the tools to achieve to their own desired performance targets, while at the same time participating in the effort to achieve performance objectives statewide. The oversight and technical assistance process is structured to be collaborative and consultative in our shared efforts to achieve the highest possible performance standards.

IOP.4.1 Conduct QAPI Orientation and Training

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that DCSS and local child support agency staff receive necessary orientation and training to effectively carry out the QAPI program. Further, child support program stakeholders should receive appropriate orientation and training.

Standard:

IOP.4.1 The local child support agency trains staff to effectively carry out the QAPI program.

Tasks:

1. Develop Core Curriculum

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall develop QAPI orientation and training for incorporation within the core curriculum of the Statewide Child Support Training Program. The QAPI Manual is structured and organized in the same manner as the statewide child support core training curricula, i.e., to reflect essential business processes. The QAPI Manual at the present time covers additional performance areas related to leadership, organization and support services; however, the inclusion of these performance areas within the core curricula is planned in subsequent phases of development.

2. Deliver QAPI Training

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall deliver QAPI program orientation and training. It is expected that initial orientation will begin in fall 2002. Core curricula training geared to the needs of other staff also will be provided. It is initially expected that at least two levels of training will be provided, i.e., one for all child support program staff and another for staff assigned to perform, manage or otherwise oversee QAPI functions. Quality assurance and performance improvement is an organization-wide responsibility and thus orientation and training will be broad-based.

3. Attend QAPI Training

The DCSS and each local child support agency shall ensure that staff attends orientation and training on the quality assurance and performance improvement program.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency staff participates in QAPI orientation and training.

Compliance Measures:

- QAPI orientation and core curriculum training is in place.
- QAPI training is timely delivered.

Authority:

IOP.4.2 Provide QAPI Assessment Guide

The intent of this functional element is to ensure development of a QAPI Assessment Guide for use by each local child support agency as well as review teams assigned to assess local agency performance. The Assessment Guide may be used by a local agency to conduct self-assessments of its own internal processes and performance, or by external review teams. The Assessment Guide is intended to provide a review protocol that can help in targeting performance issues and developing performance improvement and/or corrective action plans.

Standard:

IOP.4.2 The local child support agency is knowledgeable of and uses the QAPI Assessment Guide in developing its performance improvement efforts.

Tasks:

1. Develop QAPI Assessment Guide

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall develop a QAPI Assessment Guide providing the review tool necessary in implementing the QAPI oversight and technical assistance process. The QAPI Assessment Guide will be included in the Supplemental – QAPI Tools volume.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency staff are well versed in use of the QAPI Assessment Guide.

Compliance Measures:

- QAPI Assessment Guide in place.

Authority:

IOP.4.3 Establish Review Process

The intent of this functional element is to establish a QAPI oversight and technical assistance process that contributes to performance improvement for individual local agencies and the child support program statewide.

Standard:

IOP.4.3 The local child support agency participates in initial orientation as well as ongoing oversight and focused reviews.

Tasks:

1. Determine Types of Reviews

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies will establish the structure for oversight and technical assistance reviews. To begin it is expected that the review process will consist of (a) regularly scheduled oversight reviews; and (b) focused reviews conducted based on DCSS or local agency identification of performance issues and/or a request for technical assistance from a local agency. In addition, it is also expected that each local agency will participate in an initial orientation assessment during the first year to enable DCSS and local staff to become familiar with operations and the process.

2. Determine Frequency of Reviews

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies will establish the frequency of oversight reviews. Initially it is expected that local agency oversight reviews will be conducted on average every two years; different frequencies would be determined based on local agency performance. Focused reviews would be conducted as determined necessary or upon request of a local agency for technical assistance.

3. Establish Review Schedule

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall develop a review schedule for conducting routine oversight reviews. Priority setting for the initial reviews will be based on the current performance of the local agency. The schedule shall also permit the ability to be responsive to focused reviews identified by DCSS or requested by a local agency.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency participates in initial orientation assessment and uses findings to refine its annual QAPI Plan.

Compliance Measures:

- Initial orientation assessments conducted during the calendar year 2003.
- Schedule for oversight and focused reviews in place.

Authority:

IOP.4.4 Establish Review Teams

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that DCSS and local agency staff join together as review team members and/or team leads to assist in achieving performance improvements statewide. It is believed that performance improvements can be best achieved through partnership and collaboration among all child support program staff. The team approach provides a shared focus for staff in not only achieving the highest levels of performance possible in their local programs, but also in assisting in performance improvements statewide. Further, participation on review teams facilitates the transfer of knowledge among local staff, builds new skills and knowledge, and promotes team efforts to focus on performance improvement.

Standard:

IOP.4.4 The local child support agency provides sufficient review team members and team leads.

Tasks:

1. Determine Review Team Structure

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall determine the structure and composition of review teams to conduct oversight and focused reviews. Based on the nature and scope of the review, the number of team members and the length of time to complete the review will vary. It is expected that review teams will be organized and appropriately sized to permit a timely review process.

2. Determine Qualifications of Team Members

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall determine the necessary qualifications of both team members and team leaders. It is expected that a training and certification process will be used to credential all teams members. Further, it is likely that team leaders will be senior staff and/or those who have participated as members on at least two prior reviews.

3. Establish Standards of Conduct

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall establish a Code of Conduct for review team members to ensure that propriety and confidentiality is maintained.

4. Determine Local Agency Review Team Participation Requirements

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall determine the required level of their staff participation on review teams. It is expected that each local agency will contribute an acceptable number of staff necessary to complete the required number of reviews scheduled annually.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency contributes staff as review team participants.

Compliance Measures:

- Review team standards in place.
- Review team member Code of Conduct in place.

Authority:

IOP.4.5 Establish Review Protocol and Conduct Reviews

The intent of this functional element is to develop the protocol for conducting oversight and focused reviews. It is expected that the review process will consist of review practices that include preparatory off-site work as well as on-site visits. The nature of the review also will dictate the scope and review techniques to be applied.

Standard:

IOP.4.5 The local child support agency complies with review protocol requirements when the subject of an oversight or focused review.

Tasks:

1. Determine Scope of Review

The DCSS in collaboration with local agencies will determine the scope and review techniques to be used based on the nature of the review. The review scope will be based on at least the following: the type of review (oversight or focused); findings from prior reviews; self-assessment results; and review of performance data that suggest targeting specific areas. It is not expected that all performance areas identified in the QAPI Manual and Assessment Guide be reviewed in detail during a single review process. Oversight and focused reviews should give greatest attention to trigger issues and areas.

2. Solicit Customer and Community Input

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall establish mechanisms to solicit customer and community participation input to the review process. Input may be gathered through meetings, selected interviews, and/or customer surveys or questionnaires.

3. Review Pre-Site Documentation

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall establish review mechanisms that include pre-site visit reviews of artifacts including, but may not be limited to: self-assessment report; reports of findings from prior reviews; policies and procedures; meeting minutes and/or; other relevant materials. The intent is to permit as much preparatory work as possible to occur prior to the on-site visit.

4. Conduct On-Site Review

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall establish on-site review procedures that include, but may not be limited to: an entrance orientation meeting; on-site interviews; on-site document reviews; on-site process reviews and other on-site observations, and; an exit meeting to share key findings.

5. Prepare Report of Findings

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall establish the content and format for written reports to capture the outcomes of oversight and focused reviews.

Performance Measures:

- Review team members comply with protocol for conduct of reviews.

Compliance Measures:

- Review protocol in place.

Authority:

IOP.4.6 Participate in Annual Compliance Review

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency participates in the annual compliance review process. The current annual compliance review process will continue during calendar year 2002, with DCSS and local agency compliance reviews conducted in Spring 2003. In the future, the intent is to integrate these reviews within the QAPI program. The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall develop additional implementation plans to complete this process.

Standard:

IOP.4.6 The local child support agency conducts compliance reviews as required by DCSS.

Tasks:

1. Continue Annual Compliance Review Process

Each local child support agency shall continue to conduct annual compliance reviews in accordance with DCSS requirements and instructions. The QAPI Manual and processes incorporates required compliance measures and requires quarterly case sample reviews. The current compliance review process will be continued in the near term to ensure that compliance measures are fully incorporated into the ongoing review process. The intent is to improve compliance by enabling routine, ongoing review of compliance measures, instead of relying on the current annual episodic process.

2. Develop Transition Plan to Integrate Compliance Reviews

The DCSS in collaboration with local child support agencies shall complete the process to transition to full integration of compliance review requirements within the QAPI structure and processes.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency participates in compliance review process as required by DCSS.
- Local agency uses quarterly review process to improve compliance.

Compliance Measures:

- Required compliance measures fully integrated within QAPI quarterly case review process.

Authority:

IOP.4.7 Participate in Annual Federal Data Reliability Audit

The intent of this functional element is to ensure that each local child support agency participates with DCSS and federal auditors during annual federal data reliability audits. The QAPI Manual and processes require quarterly case sample reviews using federal data reliability audit protocols. It is expected that this will assist in meeting the 95 percent data reliability and accuracy requirements.

Standard:

IOP.4.7 The local child support agency has accurate and reliable data.

Tasks:

1. Conduct Quarterly Case Sample Reviews

Each local child support agency shall conduct quarterly case sample reviews using federal data reliability audit protocols. Corrective action plans shall be developed and further action taken to ensure that any negative findings are remedied.

2. Participate in Annual Federal Case Sample Selection Process

Each local child support agency shall participate in the process to select a sample for the annual federal data reliability audit. It is critically important that accurate audit trails be maintained at all times and DCSS instructions be carefully followed.

3. Actively Review and Respond to Federal Findings

Each local child support agency shall actively review and respond to federal findings identified during annual federal data reliability audits. The statewide sample size means that every case has a significant impact on statewide findings of data reliability. Therefore, each local agency shall devote necessary attention to responding to requests for additional information and validating the accuracy of any findings.

4. Conduct Corrective Action Based on Findings

Each local child support agency shall timely develop and correct deficiencies found by the annual federal data reliability audit.

Performance Measures:

- Local agency conducts quarterly case reviews of data reliability and takes necessary corrective actions based on findings.

Compliance Measures:

- Local agency meets or exceeds federal data reliability audit standards.

Authority:

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IOP.4 QAPI OVERSIGHT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

IOP.4.1 Conduct QAPI Orientation and Training

IOP.4.2 Provide QAPI Assessment Guide

IOP.4.3 Establish Review Process

IOP.4.4 Establish Review Teams

IOP.4.5 Establish Review Protocol and Conduct Reviews

IOP.4.6 Participate in Annual Compliance Review

IOP.4.7 Participate in Annual Federal Data Reliability Audit